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COMMENT

It's been a healthy year for off-road sport. For a while there in the summer I didn't know where to look – except up at the clouds of course. As a rider and a spectator it feels like we've never had it so good.

At times it was conflict of course, not just for headline grabbing youth championships, which clashed badly with each other in the summer, but also for GPs, Euros, Brit Champs and Pro Nats. And that's without mentioning AMCA series', two-strokes... It's obvious with so many events happening some of them will clash but can it carry on like this? Can't it all be a little more sorted or is it right that we have so much competition for competitions? What makes it all slightly baffling is when riders have to commit or risk losing entry money later in the year. What's good for the sport also seems to hold it back sometimes too.

Of course for most of us, whether we ride MX, enduro or trials the club level competition has never looked better either with so much choice of event. We're wafting along on a wave of ever-improving bikes in recent years too and that makes it all the more enjoyable. Ok they're not friggin' cheap these days but manufacturers continue to make leaps forward in handling and power which make life easy. We got just a few more of them on test this issue.

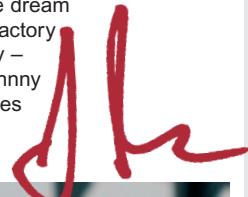
The downer is that winter has arrived. All too soon it seems – although it could easily all change by the time you read this and October could be basking in balmy sunshine many of us never witnessed in the summer.

October means bike shows are a coming and the Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh is well and truly

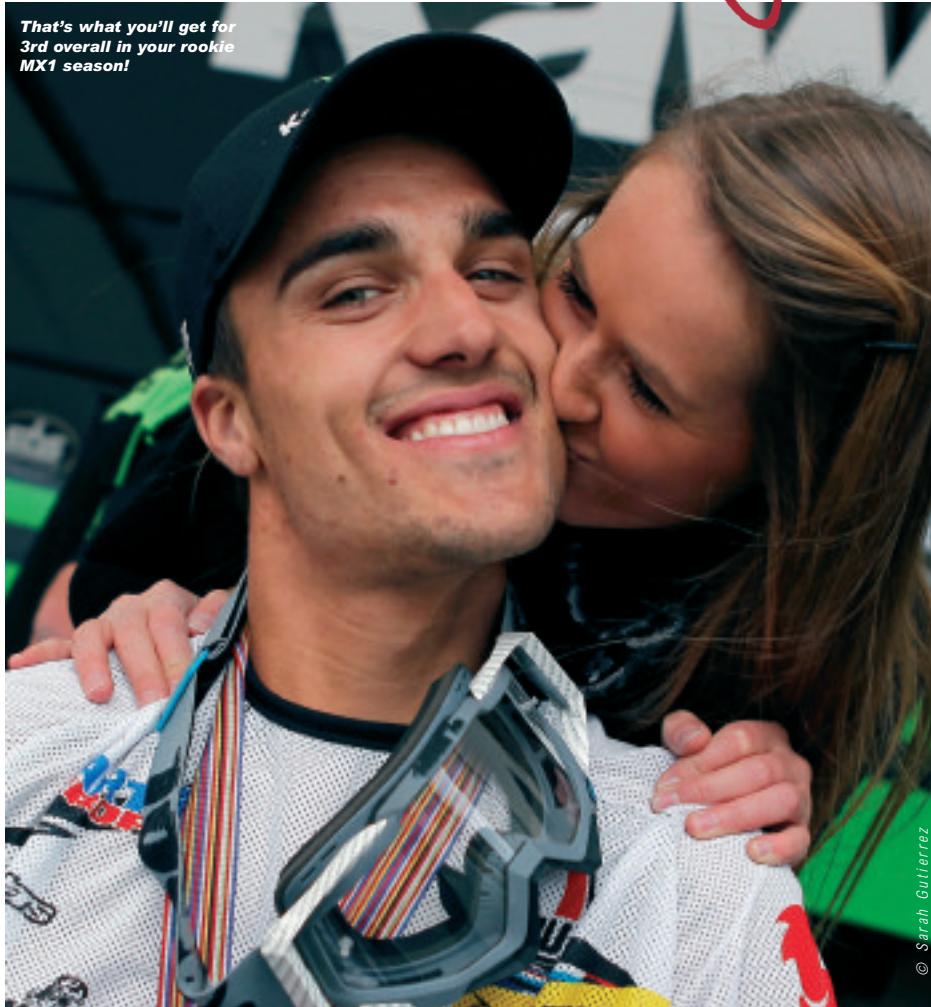
steam-rolling towards November 1. It's looking like a biggy to be honest so check it out at www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk or book your tickets now on 0844 581 0735

Motorcycle Live at the NEC is not to be missed either as we'll be ever-present between November 24 to December 4 in the off-road area. It's tempting to think it's all about road bikes but show organisers are literally ramping things up another notch this year with the Ramp'd Up Freestyle Motocross show which'll be on three times a day every day featuring fearless German rider Luc Ackermann who appears in the Guinness Book of Records as the youngest rider ever to back-flip a full-sized motorcycle – when he was 12.

What else is in this issue of DBR? It's a bumper-packed issue I tell ya! In fact I can't believe how much we've crammed in. A UK exclusive interview with WMX champ Kiara Fontanesi and a catch up with Russia's Evgeny Bobryshev in Russia – you won't read these anywhere else folks. 2013 new model bike tests from Honda, Suzuki and KTM should keep you hungry ahead of the show season too and there's also some settling advice for your used machines for all those who aren't quite of the pocket power to match the current crop – me included. Our man Geoff Walker continues his personal quest to live the dream and bags a Pro Circuit Factory Kawasaki ride – no really – and we catch up with Johnny Aubert as he contemplates life after KTM. As ever enjoy the mag.



That's what you'll get for 3rd overall in your rookie MX1 season!



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RIDER

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That'll teach him! Roczen
gives the last GP of 2012...



© Sarah Gutierrez

NEWSHUND!

THE DBR TEAM MONTHLY ROUND-UP OF THE HOT AND
THE NOT SO HOT GOSSIP IN THE OFF-ROAD WORLD

British MX racing looks to be getting stronger and stronger with plenty of rumours and rumblings about who may or may not be coming to race here in 2013. Strong rumours about Billy Mac being linked with one or more teams in the UK were floating around but check out his column this month (p27) and you'll see Mac's return is quite likely not to happen as he sounds pretty cosy with his set-up in Australia. Unless someone comes along with the right deal...

One man making that long haul trip is returning rover Brad Anderson who's signed for Maxxis Kawasaki in 2013. After so nearly signing for the Kawasaki Motors UK official MX team in 2012 – and then eventually racing in Australia – the two-time British MX champion and professional North Eastener will compete on the KX450F in both the Maxxis British Championship plus the Red Bull Pro series under the guidance of Steve James and his newly sponsored 'Maxxis Kawasaki by LPE team'.

With plans to partner Anderson up

with "riders of equal measure" – we're all eager ears for this one and hoping whoever it is puts on a better show than Marc de Reuver mustered for the Lanes Kawasaki team in 2012...

LPE team principle Steve James explains: "It was sort of like Ando was on secondment to the Australian series really and he knew we wanted him as a future part of the team. The new outfit and increased support from long term partner Maxxis, along with valuable input from Apico and Answer clothing, sealed the deal in double quick time. Now we can build on this solid foundation and I hope to be announcing other top line signings for our dedicated MX1 team in the very near future".

Looking at the bigger picture Kawasaki has to be happy with it's year as many Green riders stepped up various championship world and national ladders – not least Tommy Searle (2nd) and Gautier Paulin (3rd) in MX2 and MX1 respectively. But the Kxwa crew were still outshone, like every other manufacturer, by KTM who've clocked-up MX1, MX2, MX3 individual titles, the manufacturer's

award and the team award. Plus the long sought-after AMA title with Ryan Dungey. As KTM SEO Stefan Pierer said after the final MXGP moto of 2012, "It's been an outstanding year, like a dream for us and it is the first I have ever seen like this where any manufacturer is winning all three titles, also the manufacturers and of course our success in America this year with not just Dungey but Roczen and Musquin in the 250s." Try as they might everyone else can still stroll on.

RUMOUR MILL

What of all those riders and their movements for 2013 then? With the recent news that Tommy Searle signed to stay put at Kawasaki it seems the ball well-and-truly started to roll on the vacant slots in the GP paddock. Max Nagl has signed for Factory Honda which fills a hole in one of the best teams in the pits. It's good news obviously for Max Nagl, who's had a strong comeback from a pretty nasty back injury, but unfortunately the side-effect of this is that Rui Goncalves is no

longer in employment.

He isn't the only MX1 rider looking though, as David Philippaerts, Xavier Boog and Christophe Pourcel also have unresolved futures right now. For Philippaerts, it's a tough pill to swallow being a former World Champion with a race win under his belt in 2012 before injury put him out – seeing other guys take rides that you think you deserve can't be easy.

Pourcel is more likely to land of his feet, purely because of his Supercross/American experience, which, while he didn't exactly make friends out there, he did impress people with his skills on a bike. Of course with CP377 you get the whole package, and that's partly why he started his own team last year along with his brother. The option is to do that again but when you resort to Facebook to ask opinions on your future, something can't be going too well.

One option for the MX1 outcasts is to look to Britain, or at the very least some of the British teams – but they'll have to be quick as rides are siphoning away.

>>



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VFX-W is £389.99 and £479.99 for the Graphics models.

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- B: Belgian pillow cases**
- C: Belgian suncream**
- D: Belgian hair dressers**

If you think you know the answer log on to our website – www.dirtbikerider.com – and follow the competitions link in **dirtZone** or use your smartphone to scan the **QR code** in the top corner of this page which'll take you there directly – couldn't be easier could it!

The competition closes on **November 1st** when the first correct entry drawn randomly by DBR's prize pixie will help one lucky reader enter to whole new world of head safety and comfort.

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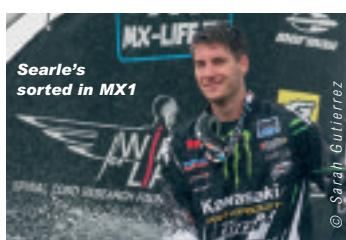
Brad's back!

Brad Ando we've already mentioned but we were slightly surprised (in an extremely good way of course) to learn Steve Ramon will be making his much anticipated come-back aboard Dave Thorpe's Buildbase Honda team in the Maxxis British championships and the Red Bull Pro Nationals. Of the Brit teams competing in GPs STR Racing team has signed up Jonathan Barragan for the year too. All good.

As far as MX2 is concerned, with Tommy Searle (sorted), Jeremy van Horebeek (to partner 2012 rookie of the year at Kawasaki Racing Team) and Joel Roelants (tbc) moving on up, there is an empty look to the top of the championship. People are hoping to see someone step up and challenge Jeffrey Herlings, but who will that "someone" be? Max Anstie is on the Rockstar Suzuki team, but you have to look at Jordi Tixier and Jake Nichols to ramp it up a notch for 2013.

One guy who will also be lining up against Herlings next year and is definitely one to watch out for is European 125 Champion, Tim Gajser. Word on the street is that Yamaha have put up a substantial amount of money to prize him away from the clutches of KTM – we will see.

With Roelants and Searle stepping up, the CLS Kawasaki rig is looking for a couple of riders to fill those spots. Michael Leib was heavy favourite to claim one of them, but no official announcement has been made there yet. And then a while ago it was thought he would be joined by his ex-Husqvarna team-mate Alessandro Lupino. Again, nothing has happened on that front yet, but with candidates slim on the ground, they need to be making a move pretty swiftly before no-one is left.



HAWKSTONE INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SEASON-OPENER SORTED FOR 2013!

February 24 is a date for your diary. The 2013 Hawkstone International Motocross happens then and although details are still being sketched out you'd be a crazy fool not to keep checking www.hawkstonemx.co.uk



Events22's Matt Bates, we're not sure who's the fella on the left is tho'

FIVE MINS WITH MATT BATES

EVENTS22 HEAD HONCHO, BOSS MAN BEHIND THE RED BULL PRO NATIONALS AND THE UPCOMING ARENACROSS SERIES ROUNDS UP HIS YEAR AND LOOKS FORWARD TO WINTER!

Matt Bates signed off a healthy year of Red Bull Pro National action this month with a season finale at Culham. It's fair to say it's been an eventful year for the seasoned promoter with the weather playing a hefty role in most off-road events. But Bates is upbeat ahead of the Arenacross season kicking off next month...

DBR: With the weather affecting so much racing in 2012 can you sum up how has the 2012 season gone for you?

MB: It's been tough on everyone; riders, the E22 crew and not to mention the fans that come to watch our events. We've moved three rounds out of seven at either very short notice or even on the day of the event been forced to cancel. I sometimes think that we've got everything right, great ideas, the best tracks and plenty of added features that you wouldn't usually see at a Motocross event... but we're doing it in the wrong country! But because I'm probably the most patriotic optimist, next year's going to be great!

DBR: Making a weekend's race meeting into more of a show for the family and spectators has clearly put a new twist on an MX event, have you been pleased with how the events like the Hawkstone weekend went off as 'spectacles'?

MB: I'd have to say yes really because we've proved time and time again that a large chunk of our fans are new to the sport; and you can see that by what

they're wearing! It's a fact that every spectator to any event (even the Olympics) has a higher rate of expectation – a need for value-added extras. A large part of my events are based upon what my family want because my wife isn't from Motocross and my boys are 4 and 6yrs. If I can make them and their friends enjoy the day then we've hit it right and as much as I'm passionate about Motocross I'm not stupid enough to think that Pro level races will draw the fans in.

DBR: And the racing has been great of course with a strong emphasis on different classes at each round. How do you think the mixed classes in MX1 and MX2 has gone down in hindsight with riders, teams and spectators?

MB: The Red Bull Pro Nationals from a pure sports perspective is primarily about the youth riders as we want to create the best riders in the world... it's that simple! As far as mixing up the MX1 & MX2 classes, I'm not in control of that, the sport is as currently there aren't 40 great riders in each class in the country (remembering that our best are at World Championships). It might not work so well for the teams, but it does work for the fans as anyone who witnessed Aubin and Barr being hounded by Irwin on an MX2 bike at Culham would have loved it! Even my mother-in-law (who knows nothing about Motocross) told me 'that Gary Irwin bloke was amazing... he only had half a bike apparently'.

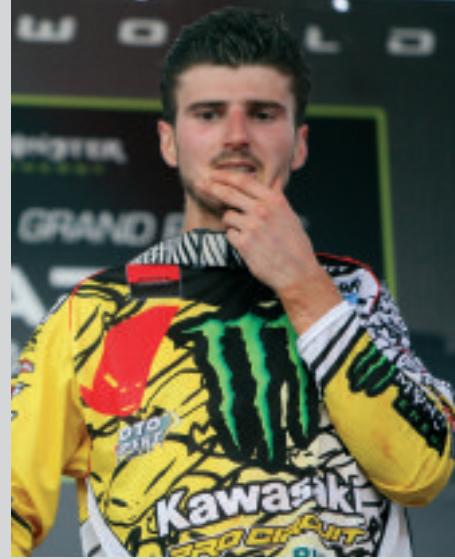
DBR: The SX season is already on our laps now so is the winter looking exciting? What's in stall and who's signed up to ride?

MB: Arenacross is something that's been in me for years since the early days of running events back in the late 90's. So now that John Hellam has hung up his boots we've decided to go all out and create a brand new series. We're visiting London's 02 Arena, The Odyssey Arena, Belfast, The LG Arena Birmingham and finishing off at Liverpool's hi-tech Echo Arena. And with tickets starting at £10 for kids I genuinely believe we're going to nail this! As for riders, we're right in the middle of that so I'd be reluctant to say at the moment, but one thing is for sure, there's one Pro Class on 250's only!

DBR: And finally next year's outdoor season seems a way off yet but what plans are there afoot you can tell us about?

MB: Our dates are already out there, but we have to wait to finally confirm once the FIM have confirmed the GP schedule as if it changes the ACU may have to move a Maxxis date... and they'd be mad to clash with us! As for any changes... we're 100% running Pro practice, qualifying and one race on the Saturday of each event as well as the usual schedule of two Pro races on the Sunday. We've also got a new track lined up that no-one has ever been to and will blow people away!

More info on the British Arenacross series at www.arenacrossuk.com



THE REVEREND

#4 IN THE WORLD!

RE-SIGNED FOR NESTAAN RACING FOR 2013 AND AN MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RESULT OF FOURTH POCKETED, THE REVEREND IS LOOKING FOR SOME R+R

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Sarah Gutierrez

Hello everyone, I hope you're all doing good! Hell it's got cold all of a sudden hasn't it... I was hoping to be able to do some jet-skiing in October like last year when it suddenly warmed up again, but I fear that's wishful thinking now. It's been a fairly active few weeks since I last wrote, what with three GP's and a weekend off and now it's the big build up to the MXoN, which will have happened by the time you read this.

I'm not nervous yet, I'm actually just looking forward to it. There are a few reasons why but the main reasons are I can't wait to get all my red, white and blue kit on as it's going to look mint! I'm also looking forward to seeing a lot of friends that are coming over for the event that I haven't seen in a long time. And it feels special too as there coming to my hometown so I have a weird sense of pride about the event too. It's going to be nice to be able to sleep in my own bed this weekend. I like sleeping in the camper but it will be easier for me to switch off at home – I hope!

After I last wrote I had a tough week training here in the sand then a slightly easier week leading up to the GP of Lierop. The weekend went quite well and I scored a decent 5th in the first moto but in the second race while riding in about 6th I started suffering with back pains and spasms so I had to let-up quite a lot and only managed 9th. I was really gutted about this as I had worked so hard in the sand all season and really wanted to show people how far I've come in the stuff, but it wasn't to be. Man that track is tough though, mainly due to the high speeds.

Next day I saw a man about my back and sure enough it all starts from my elbow which is pretty knackered. Because I can't straighten it, I ride twisted the whole time and in the sand it doubles the effect on my back as we're always hanging of the back of the bike. That weekend we headed down to Italy for the penultimate GP in Faenza where the track looked better than it used to be but it's a strange place there. Good fun to ride but every bugger seems to be able to go like stink around there which is frustrating.

First race I had a bad start and only managed a 7th. I didn't really feel comfortable and couldn't pass for half the race. The second one was the same but I crashed and winded myself badly with 10mins to go so I lost a lot of positions and could only manage 13th which was a disaster as Tixier caught me up loads in the championship and with one round to go I only had an eight point advantage over him.

I really was cheesed-off so we set off from Italy to

our mate's place in Chamonix-Mont-Blanc in the French Alps to catch up with him and let me switch off a bit to be honest, which I needed after two disappointing GP's I had almost lost it. So after four days there, and a few thousand metres climbed up mountains on my road cycle, we came back to Belgium and I rode Lommel straight away and I felt better instantly. So it shows, when you've had it up to the neck with something, sometimes it's good to say 'you know what? I've had it' and leave it for a few days. I had a nice weekend off and went mountain biking then it was back on the bike during the week in the lead up to the final GP.

My parents came over for Teutschenthal too, so it was nice to catch up with them again. Germany was only six hours away so pretty local for GP's. They've changed Teutschenthal into an outdoor SX track which seems to be the trend with the bigger drivers of the moment but it was great fun to ride although it didn't produce great racing.

I had a good weekend and felt comfy from the get go. Got my good starts back as well which was nice and I saved a few tear-offs! First race I didn't ride great as the shock was too stiff and I couldn't hang it out. But the second race was spot-on and I holeshot and lead for two laps which felt awesome! After a half way I started thinking about the championship and where Tixier was but he was a long way back so I knew if I brought it home safely it was a done deal. Which is what I did but in the process I missed the final Podium of the year by one MISERABLE POINT AARRGGHH!

So this took the edge a little off what is the biggest achievement of my life to this date and it's come from nothing but hard work and great support this season. There was no big piss-up for me that night as I need as much energy as possible for the MXoN the following weekend.

Yesterday my Dad and I went to a huge four story cycle shop and he bought me a new road cycle as he promised he would if I finished 4th. It's funny because the last time he made a bet with me like that it was if I got 2nd in the 60cc British Schoolboy championship in 1999! I did too and he had to buy me a new BMX, pretty cool eh?

So I look forward to Lommel where hopefully I will have seen a few of you there. All of my kit looks fantastic and stands out well so you won't miss me! Cheers for all the continued support and thanks for

SADDLES START TO FALL, BUT NOT ALL

O'S RUNG THE SHOW? RIDERS? TMS? OR IS THE ENERGY

The Motocross of Nations saw David Philippaerts confirmed as a Honda Gariboldi rider for 2013. The Italian has seen the past two seasons wrecked by double wrist fractures and at 28 years of age – only Marc de Reuver is older in MX1 – is reaching the edge of his racing prime. Don't forget that Philippaerts was Italy's first MX1 World Champion in 2008 in the first of his five seasons as a factory Monster Energy Yamaha rider. Gariboldi is a well-financed team that has been on the GP scene for three years now. Giacomo Gariboldi has made his money through fine art and horse breeding and developed his crew from a junior race project that produced Christophe Charlier as a formidable force in the 2009 European Championship to one of the few Grand Prix squads that can operate on a liberated privateer philosophy. Philippaerts was part of a gaggle of second-string but vastly experienced riders who have yet to find a saddle for 2013. The lack of rider announcements for next season has come about purely through political necessities (when brands and sponsors are ready to relinquish a rider or declare a new strategy) and the feeling of instability in the paddock with team budgets yet to be cleared to tackle more overseas events and rising travel costs and even the number of bikes that can be run. The paddock partly reinvents itself every season anyway with teams (goodbye to Chris Bourcier's 377 Kawasaki crew) brands (Arrivederci/Auf weidensen Husqvarna...again) and sponsors (some rumours of the level of Rockstar's input for 2013) all in flux. Those athletes in contract limbo – unusually by this point of the racing year – includes the likes of Shaun Simpson, Xavier Boog, Rui Goncalves and the Bourcier brothers. Is this part of natural selection? Or a shift in the sport that sees teams banking with one 'A-lister' and seeking a younger and cheaper second choice?

UK TO DOUBLE-UP?

TWICE THE VALUE OR TWICE THE TROUBLE? COULD WE SEE TWO BRITISH GPS IN 2013?

The expected emergence of the 2013 calendar – that is rarely set in stone until the depths of winter – could see a double visit to the UK. By the time of going to press the FIM and Youthstream are on the verge of releasing another version of the fixture list that might see Matterley Basin hosting the second MX Festival and another site in England entertaining a second British stop. Names like Hawkstone Park and Mallory Park have been mentioned and if the double transpires to be true then it will be the first time these shores entertain two FIM appointments since the ill-fated British and English GPs of 2005 at Matchams Park and Isle of Wight respectively. Both venues have since been put out to pasture with the modest scales of success as reasons to blame for the disappearance. And this was not in a recession year.

TIME FOR A DESERT STORM?

COULD MXGP BE FOLLOWING THE F1 AND MOTOGP EXAMPLE OF GOING GLOBAL WITH NEW ROUNDS PROPOSED IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Sarah Gutierrez

The Grand Prix of Germany drew the FIM Motocross World Championship to a close but even at the sixteenth round, fourteenth country and in the sixth month of GP competition thoughts were already leading onto 2013. Youthstream came within hours of hosting a press conference on Saturday in which they were expected to talk about one of the 'TBAs' on the '13 schedule. Delegates from the promoter had spent three days in +47 degree temperatures the previous week examining the site of the FIM series' very first trip Qatar for a logically logical stop back from – or on the way to – Thailand (another first for MXGP) that will open the world championship at the beginning of March. The press conference was delayed with a view towards an announcement at Lommel for the Motocross of Nations the following week but rumours and chat around the paddock indicate that a new motocross facility is to be constructed in the confines of the Losail road racing complex (home to the floodlight MotoGP opener) near Doha and the ground is more rocky than sandy. Qatar is no stranger to motocross and the arrival of top flight motorsport – indeed the construction of Losail itself over half a decade ago – came through the Qatari federation employing the services of some previous managers at MotoGP promoters Dorna. The country has been linked with a Grand Prix for a number of years but allegedly one stumbling block was a contract held by former World Champion Georges Jobe who organised a high-profile International meeting on their sand ten years ago. Whatever the situation now Qatar has been part of the rumour-mill for the last two-three seasons and, together with Thailand, aptly fulfills the FIM's wish to spread the sport into other global territories. For MotoGP Losail is a wrecking-ball to their average crowd figures each season. The behemoth of people at places like Jerez, Sachsenring and Brno can touch 200,000 over three days but Qatar

barely breaks into five figures. The country is hardly a motorsport hotspot with a population of two million but it doesn't take a genius to know why sports like F1, MotoGP and now motocross head to territories like Abu Dhabi. There is little doubt that a Qatari round of the FIM Motocross World Champion adds an exotic edge and will be a novel addition to the calendar – particularly if they made it a night race!

Like it or not MX has to follow the funding to continue to aspire to standards that might help it grow in terms of audience or new investors for the teams. As the grand prix will be chiefly about cash then you can only hope that the appropriate assistance is provided to teams to be able to make the costly transcontinental trip next spring. Youthstream President Giuseppe Luongo publicly spoke about a support fund for the top five privateer teams and this has to be first step in a more cosmopolitan and welcome set of Grand Prixs.



Where'd everyone go?



Bad hair Max shakes with Rockstar and Suzuki

mxgp news



Could Nagl be switching from Red Bull?

NAGL GOES RED BUT WITH THE BULL?

WHO'S RUNNING THE SHOW? RIDERS? TEAMS? OR IS THE ENERGY DRINKS COMPANIES?

The German Grand Prix saw the well-publicised outings of the two 'Max's' in new colours as our own Max Anstie finally tied up his Rockstar Energy Suzuki Europe agreement and Max Nagl left a KTM saddle for the first time since the start of the century to become Evgeny Bobryshev's works Honda World Motocross team-mate. "We're here to talk about the worst kept secret in motocross," said Honda Motor Europe's Roger Harvey. Nagl had been previously released by the Austrians after completing just one year from the previous five as a factory rider without injury, despite being just 25. The German had been courted by both Suzuki and Honda and became the obvious choice for the latter once Tommy Searle had taken the decision he was going to stay on a Kawasaki. "I have known the team a long time and they have always looked professional and there was no politics; this is important for me," Nagl said, perhaps in a slight dig at the De Carli MX1 operation in Red Bull KTM that (understandably) focuses heavily on Tony Cairoli.

A sticking point that could remain is Nagl's decade long association with

Red Bull. Something that clearly didn't help negotiations with Rockstar Suzuki and could still throw a spanner in the works with Honda who insist on team deals, rather than individual rider arrangements (a reason why Bobryshev no longer runs in Monster Energy colours). "This is one of the small details we need to work out," revealed Nagl. "For sure I want to keep with Red Bull. The rehab and recovery options and work they have done with me is so important and they are 90% of the reason why I was able to come back from my back injury."

The politics of energy drinks that (rightfully) demand high visibility on their investment became clear just in time for Anstie who entered the Suzuki press conference on Saturday wearing his Arma cap and swiftly remembered to remove it when it dawned on the nineteen year old that he was sitting next to Rockstar Suzuki Europe's Thomas Ramsbacher and Technical man Jens Johansson. Anstie will again be appearing in West Coast Lites Supercross races in what is likely to be a more official link-up with the RM-Z250 and Suzuki U.S after his virtual obscurity in select 2012 rounds on the Honda.



IRN-BRY

LIVING THE DREAM

SIT DOWN, MAKE YOURSELVES COMFY BECAUSE BRYAN IS GOING TO TELL YOU A STORY, AN ORDINARY STORY OF A MAN RACING IN GP'S...

Words by **Bryan Mackenzie** Photo by **JP O'Connell**

I got a nudge for this month's column as I was packing up my van and about to head out the door to the last round of the MXGP's in Teutschenthal, Germany. In case you missed it I got the opportunity to ride the last three MX1 GP's for team STR KTM, filling in for an injured rider, and thinking this will be my final shindig with these guys, and possibly the last GP of my career, I wanted to put something on paper. I'm 27 now you see, not getting any younger and I'm certainly not expecting or hoping this will kick start a fresh career opportunity for me touring with the world championship. It was just an incredible opportunity at a time when there wasn't a lot going on in the UK.

So I thought it might document my weekend and if it's to be last ride ever at a GP it'll be pretty cool to look back and reminisce the shit out of it when I'm old and balder! So, once upon a time in a town far, far away, a little outside Edinburgh to be precise and on a pretty awesome Friday, I embarked on a journey.....

06:00 - I'm rudely awoken by my girlfriend kissing my face and talking to me because it would be the last she saw of me until Monday, as she's heading off to work.

07:45 - snoozing the shit out of my alarm for 15 minutes because I love my bed!

08:00 - finishing off packing and doing the ironing because that's my job! Ghay!

11:10 - finally left home 10 minutes behind schedule cause I decided to drop the Cosby's off at the pool before leaving.

11:10-15:30 - driving down to Leeds Bradford airport. I always go in to deep thought when I drive and it's probably where I do most of my over-analysing, as I do. I thought about the contrast of racing the Scottish Nationals last weekend to the World Championship this weekend where my competition goes from Tony Craig to Tony Cairoli. Keepin' it real! Also devastated at following google maps option 2 to the airport because the A65 is the most depressing road in the UK - no where to pass!

1700 - The flight is delayed! Just what we need after what is already a late flight to be taking to the GP.

1810 - Finally the bird is off the ground - 40 minutes later than scheduled.

21:00 - Just landed in Berlin, grabbed my Ogio gear bag and hitting the road for the 200km trip towards the hotel.

23:00 - Absolutely starving and our choices are limited at this time of night. Stopped at a motorway servo but would be better pulling up on the hard shoulder and scraping something up from there. If we're quick and it's fresh enough it would probably be warmer too.....
0020 - Finally in the hotel and in my sack after over 12 hours of travelling. Early morning ahead again.

SATURDAY

07:15 - Alarm wakes me up.

07:16 - Sleeping again.

07:20 - Alarm wakes me up....again.

07:21 - Sleeping.....again.

07:25 - Alarm has again woke me up but this time I have to get up. Quick shower and I'm down for breakfast which looks more to me like lunch. Continental - pah!

08:40 - En route to the track which is about 30 minutes away.

09:30 - Turned up at Teutschenthal and have to find the truck. MX2 are already on track.

09:45 - Have to jump straight in my kit for the first session of practice. No time to look at the track.

AWESOME!

10:15 - free practice - Literally never got to see any of the track before riding out on it. I practically roll round the first 3 laps. It takes a while to learn as there are a lot of jumps and many where I can't see the landings making it hard to remember what's what and judge my speed initially. I come in and talk gearing with Toby, my STR mechanic and change an exhaust to get the bike feeling more like the one I've been riding at home. I end the session in 20th.

11:30 - I've come to look at a double I never jumped in free practice with JLaw and smashed some Nutella sandwiches down en route. It actually isn't a dodgy jump but neither of us jumped it first time out - probably 'cause we never got to size it up on a track walk. We've seen three or four MX3 guys eject

themselves off the track trying to jump it so now it looks a bit more daunting.

14:00 - Pre-qualifying - planned not to do many laps to save energy but probably exert it all anyway on lap two with my first attempt at the double which resulted in an OJ (over jump). I crash into the fence putting the shits right up the crowd and hit a kid in the shins! My bad. Finished the session 21st.

15:00 - Two more sandwiches in between sessions cause my good lady wife isn't here to fill me full of race gas - I'm running total pump fuel today. It's funny that I work hard all week to prepare well and I eat my worst the weekend of a GP because it's not easy to be organised when I don't have my own van/camper or routine.

16:50 - Qualifying race - a good start in 13th. There is a lot of bumping and barging in the first few turns, actually make that the first couple of laps. It can be quite intimidating in there but I'm hanging in. A Kawi showed me a wheel on my outside so I gave him a little suttin'-suttin'! He passes me three laps later and it's CP377. I almost pat myself on the back. The race has settled down as the track is a lot like the A65 - pretty hard for passing with lots of tight corners and deep inside ruts. Finished 18th.

17:40 - Sitting down after the race at the truck and got the times up on my iPhone to analyse the race while still sweating it out. Taking on lots of water!

18:00 - Had a quick debrief with Toby, he asks how everything is with the bike and as per usual it's all okay - I don't like to change much. I got changed, cleaned up and organised my stuff for tomorrow

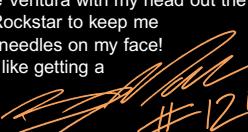
19:00 - leaving the circuit for the hotel and just heard a guy use the word 'Streuth' in context and in all seriousness.....I'm taken aback.

20:30 - Getting dinner with the team at a potato place where everything on the menu has tatties in it. I've taken the liberty to assume that 'kartoffelhaus' means potato house! I'm eating a potato lasagne.

2205 - In bed and laying here going over laps and lines and more laps in my head trying to be better prepared for tomorrow! I'll do this for hours, it annoys me but I can't help myself!

SUNDAY

07:10 - woke up with no alarm after a pretty sketchy sleep. The pillows were like bags of air - shite.
07:20 - Having a quick breakfast of just muesli because I could still feel my dinner from late last night and I don't want to feel full and lethargic for morning practice.
08:00 - Leaving for the track with the gang and it's super cold outside! Winter is looming - devastated!
09:10 - Getting geared up for morning practice
09:30 - Out on track for warm up. People don't really care about this session too much - Tony Cairoli isn't even out for it and I see him around the track watching bits.
11:00 - generally sat about the awning shooting the shit with the boys since finishing warm up and just sent an email to Jonno asking if I can get a DBR column extension because I'm noting so much - got my work priorities straight y'see!
12:00 - Am watching the MX2 race with JLaw and we've bumped into Shaun (Simpson) in the upper level of the pit lane. We watch it together from up here because each bay has live timing and TV screens so we are watching the same footage as you guys are back home for the bits of the track we can't see up here.
12:40 - went to the line to prep a gate and seen EBB storming back through the pits. Was gutted for him as he was on the pipe in that moto in the top three with only a few to go!
13:00 - Race 1 - Pourcel steals the gate I prepped in standard Pourcel style! Everyone prepares a gate but he never does and just takes anyone's, so I steal mateys next door. Not how I would prep a gate and wheel spun like a scene out of fast and the furious. Carnage in the first two turns gift me some places. Nicked a water hose early somehow and the bike starts smoking unbeknown to me. Right now Toby's clipper is puckered up and his fingers crossed! Fight in the top 16 for half the moto and then settled in 18th with a big gap around me. It's pretty boring now that nothing is happening. Some German fans are randomly cheering me on, they must of heard about my standard grade pass in German at high school and think of me as their own. I finish 18th.
14:00 - Off to the wash bay to wash some boots and stuff and speak to Toby about the bike. He thinks we go to the spare bike as I might of fried the race bike. I don't want to because it would feel completely different so he's taking every precaution to make it right.
15:53 - moto 2 - another average start but moved forward on the first lap. Worked to behind Shaun in 16th and hung out there for a while. Keeping the pressure on Shaun and dealing with heat from Leek. Barragan goes out mid race so I moved up a spot to 15th. Shaun hits me in the mouth with a stone and it bounces off my bottom teeth and I constantly keep running my tongue over them now to see if I chipped them. I'm better in the first half lap than him but he is better in the second. Leek right up my hoop again with two to go. He does me with just over a lap left. Gutted! 16th!
16:50 - Everyone has come back pretty pumped about our last race together. I guess I'm pretty happy too because I fought hard for it with guys that are pretty awesome. No time for hanging about though as we have a 10pm flight. Grab a shower and pack up what I want to take home and leave in the truck whatever I can do without for the week. I shake hands and thank the mechanics for a great time.
17:30 - We've left the circuit de moto and instantly got stuck in traffic.
18:00 - Finally got above 5km/h and we have to pin it to the airport.
19:30 - Bollocks! Heavy motorway traffic now and starting to panic about making the flight. Should we wait and hope it clears or find an alternative route. We've gone with the latter...
20:50 - Make it to the airport after a google maps gamble.
21:55 - Sat my ass on the plane but in what seems the norm for jet2, it's late!
22:30 - Finally we're airborne for the 2 hour flight home.
23:20 - Landed and it's pissing with rain.
00:00 - Shake more hands, say my goodbyes and now sat in my van and pointing her north!
02:00 - Driving like Ace Ventura with my head out the window sipping on a Rockstar to keep me awake. The rain is like needles on my face! This is what it must be like getting a face tattoo...
04:00 - At last, I'm



Bradshaw sealed the MX2 RPNs...



...while Aubin will fly home to France with the MX1 honours

BULLS OVER

RED BULL PRO NATS CLIMAXES AT CULHAM WITH AUBIN AND BRADSHAW TAKING TOP HONOURS

Words by Jon Pearson Photos by JP O'Connell

With a bit of re-jigging account for a monsoon (if there's one thing race organisers have learnt to predict this year it's the rain!) the Red Bull Pros lined-up for two Saturday motos at Culham to settle their 2012 scores. With a 19-point lead ahead of the penultimate moto the Buildbase Honda rider Nico Aubin was in a commanding position – although title rival Martin "Bruiser" Barr on the Tyco Suzuki by TAS had a few other ideas.

A bad-tempered affair set the ball rolling with the championship top two duking it out like heavyweights before Aubin stalled, handing the advantage to the Irishman and helping diffuse the situation. MVR-D Honda's Jason Dougan took the race win from flying MX2 pilot Graham Irwin on the Emberson Yamaha mixing it with the 450s. Barr was looking good for third until Doog's Estonian team-mate Gert Krestinov nipped past on the final lap. The move pinched points from Barr making Aubin's advantage 17 points with a race to go.

Barr going down on the opening lap the second MX1 moto was a bit of an anti-climax as Aubin kept his cool and brought it home third in class to take the crown. "In the first moto I was coming back through like I normally do and then Martin Barr started to play games with me which was a bit stupid so the first moto I did

some mistakes," explained Nico. "In the second one I didn't make the best start but I thought about the championship and just rode it out to the end to try and get this title. I don't like to ride like that but it was more important for me to win the championship and I am really, really happy."

Krestinov raced to victory and the MX1 overall on the day, chased across the line by Bradshaw and Irwin. Barr battled through from more or less dead last to cross the line 10th from second in the championship ahead of Krestinov.

With a 32-point lead at the start of the day over Steven Lenoir - who, having been fired from the Emberson Yamaha team the previous day, was racing a Tyco Suzuki by TAS machine – Evotech Stevens Honda rider Neville Bradshaw needed to secure a solid finish to regain the title he won in 2009. But the 29-year-old was determined to sign off in style and fought through the pain barrier to come home second MX2 rider and take the 2012 championship champion by 39 points from Lenoir with Irwin third. "That was a painful race!" Said Nev. "I knew the championship was on and I wanted to go out there and put the title out of reach. It's been a tough season but me and the team have never given up and this makes all the hard work worthwhile. It was an unbelievable day really," he admitted. "On Thursday I was wondering whether I would even be able to ride!"



JONTY'S BOX

MONEY MATTERS!

WITH REDUCED OFFERINGS AND CUT BACKS APLENTY, ARE THE EWC'S BUMPER PAY DAYS A THING OF THE PAST...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

I hope this doesn't jinx things, but from where I'm sitting – the press room on day four of the 87th International Six Days Enduro in Germany – it's hard to fault this year's event. There's still time for things to go astray, and there's a very real possibility of that due to the 'supermoto/motocross' planned for the final day, but right now, on day four, things look good.

A sore and blistered thumbs up is pretty much what every rider has given the event so far, and with super-slick organisation, a well-structured paddock, and largely great weather, it's easy to see why. But it's the course – special tests and time controls – that have received the most praise. Ok, there was a bit too much roadwork during the start of the week, but on days three and four it's been a 'proper enduro'.

Getting the balance right, making the event tough enough but not too tough, is all but impossible. But rather than shy away from delivering a race that challenges the top riders, as has been the case at some six days in recent years, organisers have come up with the goods, while holding back from going over the top with things. One thing's certain – anyone that finishes this year's



event will definitely have earned their medal.

Attention to detail at all special tests puts the majority of EWC events to shame. Staffed with more people than are arguably needed, as you'd expect from our German friends, everything's well planned, well laid out and well organised.

Tests are long, anything but easy, and not only typical of the Saxony area of Germany but fine examples of what 'true' enduro tests should be.

Making it an event to remember are the thousands of spectators that turned up to watch the action – organiser's reckon 25,000 headed for the woods on day three alone. With a long and passionate enduro history in what was once former East Germany, the fact that the event is as equally well-supported as it is well organised suggests that Germany 2012 will be one of the best in recent years.

As we go to print with this issue of DBR, MX2 champ Jeffrey Herlings has entered

Weston Beach Race. They have a history of tempting top names in motocross to take part and the "fastest man in the sand" will be good to watch. Let's hope he likes the weather!

Jonty

BEC UPDATE

SAGAR TOPS THE NATTERJACK

After an extended summer break due to event cancellations caused by the dismal British weather, the British Enduro Championship finally returned to action with the Natterjack Enduro. Taking full advantage of both David Knight (KTM) and Danny McCanney's (Gas Gas) absence due to EWC commitments, Honda's Tom Sagar held off a strong challenge from Crescent KTM's Daryl Bolter to secure the overall win.

On day one it was Bolter who pressured Sagar into a mistake on the final special test of the day to claim his first win of the season. However, on day two it was Bolter's turn to falter and after a heavy crash on the cross test he was forced to retire, allowing Sagar through for the win. The victory now puts Sagar in the lead of the BEC with one round remaining.

With riders allowed to drop their two worst scores from the eight days of racing though, the championship is still a three-way battle between Sagar, Knight and McCanney. The event also saw two classes decided as Steve Holcombe (KTM) and Aled Price (KTM) collected the Expert and Clubman championships respectively.

X GAMES EXPANSION

EUROPE SET TO WELCOME X GAMES IN 2013

News from the States suggests that X Games is going global. Rather than just one event in Los Angeles, the world's biggest extreme sports show will become a four-event tour with 'rounds' in South America, Germany and Spain, before ending back in California.

Little else is known about what's planned, but if X Games does come to Europe, and features an Endurocross event as it has in the US the last two years it could be great news for a number of Britain's extreme enduro racers.



LESS IS MORE

125S ON THE INCREASE

One thing that was clear at this year's International Six Days Enduro was the increase in competitors on 125cc two-stroke machinery. With an greater number of riders arming themselves with the smaller capacity machines for the event, Great Britain's Jamie McCanney (Husaberg) proved on day one that bigger isn't always better.

Powering his way to an incredible 12th place in the E1 overall classification, the 18-year old Manxman showed just what's capable on an eighth litre screamer. Interestingly, newly crowned Enduro 1 World Champion Antoine Meo is desperate to race a 125 at the EWC final in France...



DANNY MCCANNEY – GAS GAS' #1 FOR 2013

MANX ACE SET TO LEAD SPANISH TEAM

With four-time Enduro World Champion Ivan Cervantes set to leave Gas Gas at the end of the season Britain's Danny McCanney looks to become the team's lead rider in 2013.

Rumoured to have no plans to replace Cervantes with a rider of similar

standing, while there's little doubt that the Girona based marque will field riders in all four main classes in the EWC next year McCanney could well take a lead role.

Delivering the best form of his career to date in recent events, at the penultimate round of this year's EWC series in Finland he topped the Enduro

Junior class on day two, finishing in front of newly crowned EJ World Champion Mathias Bellino.

Backing up his EWC performance with a very strong showing at the ISDE, Danny's international form is most certainly rising, which bodes well for his assault on the 2013 Enduro Junior World Championship.



DK ON THE MEND

STOMACH OP PUT'S KNIGHTER BACK ON TRACK

Bringing what's been a largely disappointing season to a frustrating end David Knight recently underwent surgery to fix 'a few internal' problems. Following blood tests after the Finnish round of the EWC, DK was advised to keep away from racing until more was known as to why his blood levels were out of sync and not looking good.

Finding an 'internal tear', which was causing the three-time world champ to bleed on the inside, surgeon's in Manchester got him fixed following a relatively straightforward procedure, and all being well he'll be on a bike pretty soon, after missing the ISDE.

Hoping to be fit enough to race the final round of the British Enduro Championship, DK will then, if all's well, race the final round of the EWC in France. "Things are ok now," commented DK a week post-operation, "but I was in some serious pain for a while. It's certainly not what I wanted, but hopefully when everything's healed I'll feel better than I have in a while and can get back to winning some races."

FOUR BECOMES TWO AT BETA

ITALIAN FIRM JOIN THE TWO-STROKE RACE

Italian manufacturer Beta have been keeping their R&D department busy of late and recently unveiled new from the ground-up two-stroke models. Adding the 250 and the 300 RR two strokes to their already established range of four-stroke models, Beta hope to capitalise on the increase in popularity of two strokes. And there are no shortage of smokers coming from KTM/Husaberg, Husqvarna, Gas Gas...the resurgence is good to see (and ride for that matter).

Manufactured and assembled in-house, the new models are the result of more than 24 months worth of work that Beta hopes will 'set a new benchmark in terms of technology, layout and performance offered from a two-stroke enduro engine'.

WHO, WHERE?

WHERE NEXT FOR EWC'S BIG GUNS?

As the 2012 season draws to a close confirmation of where some of enduro sport's top riders will race for next year remains a mystery. As yet riders like David Knight, Johnny Aubert, Ivan Cervantes and Pela Renet are all busy trying to renew contracts, and for some find new teams to work for in 2013.

It's almost certain that Pela Renet will stay with Husaberg for 2013. The Frenchman is favourite to collect this year's Enduro 2 World title and therefore is a rider Husaberg don't want to lose, but Pela's a man in demand and has received more than a few lucrative offers in recent months.

Ivan Cervantes has broken free from his contract with Gas Gas one-year early. Sources suggest the four-time

world champion will be partnered with KTM for next year while Johnny Aubert is in talks with KTM about renewing his contract for 2013. Through mechanical issues and injuries it's not been the best of seasons for the Frenchman, but for a rider still capable of winning world titles, and with a positive future ahead of him in rally, Aubert is hoping to stay put.

With Antoine Meo, Christophe Nambotin and Cristobal Guerrero all confirmed as staying with KTM and Cervantes now likely to be moving back also that means somebody, maybe more than one, will have to move out. In what's been a frustrating season for both parties, David Knight looks certain to change colours for 2013. As yet it's unknown who he'll race for and whether he'll remain in the EWC.



Jake Weimer grabbed third at the death



Barcia was 2nd to Baggett overall in 250s



OUTDOORS ARE OVER!

BLAKE BAGGETT TAKES HIS FIRST PRO TITLE WINNING THE 250S AS THE DOOR ON THE AMA OUTDOOR SEASON

Words and photos by Steve Cox

With the 450cc title decided going into the penultimate round of the 2012 Lucas Oil/AMA Pro Motocross Championship, most eyes were focused on the 250cc title chase, where Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Blake Baggett had led the entire championship, but had begun to come under attack from the GEICO Honda duo of Eli Tomac and Justin Barcia. Tomac and Barcia are the same two racers who snatched up the Lites East and West Supercross championships this year, and Mitch Payton's squad was relying on Baggett alone to stop the GEICO Honda team from sweeping the 2012 championships – something that only Pro Circuit has done.

Baggett carried 24 points into Steel City, and then grabbed the holeshot in moto one. In the preceding races, this would mean a Baggett runaway more often than not, but instead, Baggett sat fourth by the end of the second lap. He was going the wrong way.

Meanwhile, Barcia led the first 12 laps of the race as team-mate Tomac worked his way forward. With four laps remaining, Tomac was all over Barcia, then made the pass stick with an outside/inside move before the finish line with three to go. Tomac takes the moto win over Barcia, Ken Roczen and Baggett.

Rookie Jeremy Martin grabbed the moto-two holeshot, but within a few turns, Tomac took over the lead, and he never looked back, taking a 1-1 moto score for the overall while Roczen grabs second in front of Barcia and Baggett.

With a 1-1 score by Tomac and a 4-4 score by Baggett, Tomac moves up to second in points (past team-mate Barcia) and Baggett's points lead is cut to 14 points with two motos left to run.

The math was that Baggett needed at least a 3-4 score at Elsinore to take the championship, but Baggett had other plans...Barcia grabbed the holeshot to start moto one at the season finale over Marvin Musquin, Baggett, Wil Hahn, Jessy Nelson, Tomac, and the rest of the field. Baggett immediately went to work, though, and snatched second away from Musquin on lap three. Tomac stuck close to Baggett and went by Musquin quickly as well, moving into third. Baggett goes by Barcia a couple laps later, but Barcia fights back while Tomac tries to make sense of the two dicing in front of him. Baggett eventually secures the lead while Tomac ends up stuck behind his team-mate Barcia, who is battling for the championship himself. Eventually Tomac gets by his team-mate but by then Baggett is long gone.

With the moto win, Baggett greatly improves his championship position. If Tomac would have beaten Baggett in the moto, Baggett would've needed to finish sixth or better in the final moto to secure the title. But with Baggett beating Tomac, all Baggett needed was a 12th-place finish.

Baggett isn't the type of guy who settles for 12th, though. Alex Martin grabs the holeshot in moto two, but Barcia again grabs the early lead, and this time he begins to put some distance on the field while Jason Anderson moves into second and proceeds to hold off the rest of the field valiantly. Baggett starts well outside the top 10 and sits seventh by lap three. This is enough for the title, but he continues moving forward until, on lap seven, he sits second. Then, he falls, relinquishing second to Musquin for one lap. This cost Baggett a ton of time, but Baggett moves back into second on lap nine out of 14 and sets out after Barcia. At the white flag, Barcia has eight seconds on Baggett, but Baggett keeps pushing, and with two turns to go, he's less than a second behind the Honda rider. Barcia ends up taking the moto win, but looks back over the finish line at Baggett, seemingly surprised that the new champion was so close at the finish.

Baggett takes the overall win with a 1-2 score, but more importantly takes the championship – his first-ever professional title.

In the 450cc class, Ryan Dungey completed the season in style after clinching the title, winning the final four motos of the year to end the season with 18 moto wins out of 24, then five second place finishes and one third-place finish (in the opening moto of the series at Hangtown). Jake Weimer is the big mover going from fifth to third overall at the last round.

FINAL STANDINGS

450cc	
1	Ryan Dungey
2	Mike Alessi
3	Jake Weimer
4	Andrew Short
5	Broc Tickle

250cc	
1	Blake Baggett
2	Justin Barcia
3	Eli Tomac
4	Ken Roczen
5	Marvin Musquin

Baggett gets the #1 plate, who gets the champagne?



No let-up for Team USA heading to Europe

BACK TO WORK!

NO LET-UP FOR TEAM USA RIDERS WHO SHIPPED STRAIGHT OUT TO EUROPE FOR MXoN

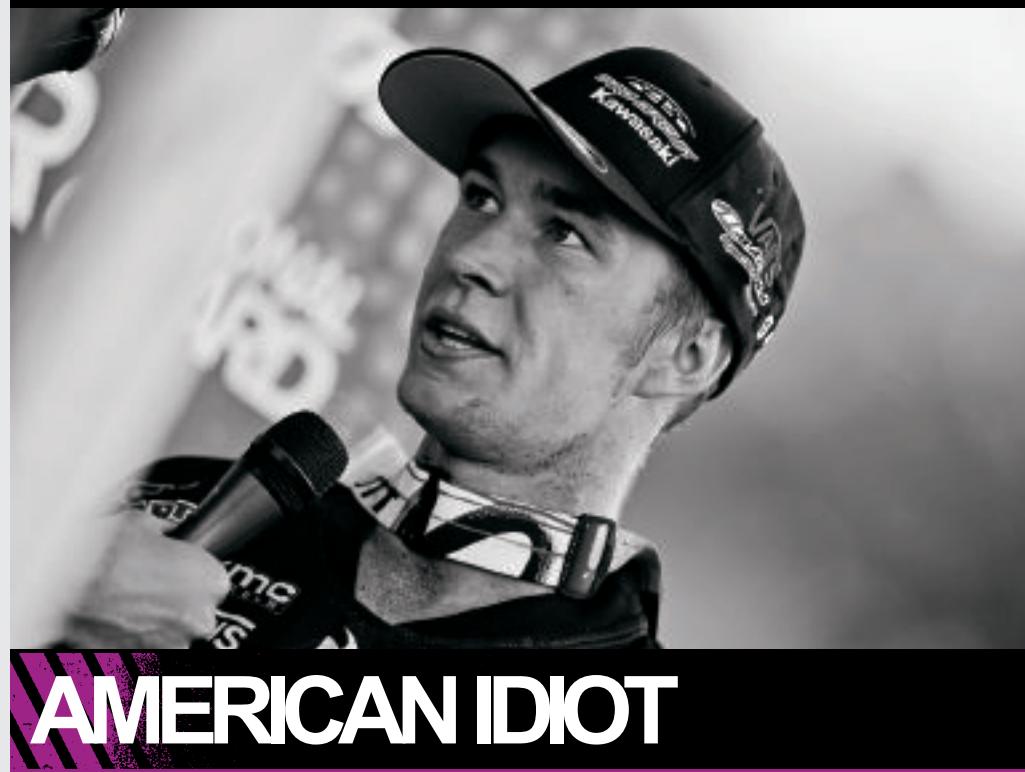
After wrapping up the 2012 AMA Motocross Season on Saturday, September 8, Blake Baggett, Justin Barcia and Ryan Dungey were back at work by Monday, September 10. What were they doing? Getting the final testing done for their FIM-spec exhaust, fuel, etc., for the upcoming Motocross of Nations, as their bikes and parts were scheduled to be on an airplane by Wednesday, September 12, in order to be available in time for testing and racing in Europe starting a couple of weeks later. Unlike most Motocross of Nations events, Team USA showed up about a week and a half early for the 2012 event so they could test in some proper European sand, as there aren't sand tracks quite like Lommel in the USA.



BAGGETT WANTS #4

250 CHAMP WANTS CARMICHAEL'S 'RETIRED' RACE NUMBER

The AMA rules state that single-digit numbers are reserved only for past National Champions. That being said, last year's AMA 250cc National Champion, Dean Wilson, chose 15 as his permanent number. This year, though, Blake Baggett wants the number 4. The number 4 is a heavy one, as it was Ricky Carmichael's number, and the AMA retired the number for five years, following Carmichael's retirement at the end of 2007. That means it's available now, and Baggett wants it. His only concern is how fans will react to him using the number, but Ryan Villopoto already picked up Jeremy McGrath's old number, 2, and no one seemed to mind. Chances are good that Baggett will end up with the number 4 for the rest of his career. The only other single-digit options are 6 (formerly belonging to Steve Lamson) and 8 (formerly belonging to Grant Langston).



AMERICAN IDIOT

PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENTS?

COXY (AND BLAKE BAGGETT) BLOWS DRUG ACCUSATIONS IN THE WEEDS, OR SHOULD THAT BE TWEETS?

Words and photo by Steve Cox

Following the Steel City National, Justin Barcia Tweeted that he doesn't know how people can be happy with themselves when they know they're cheating. He later said it wasn't about motocross, and that may or may not be true, but word in the pits was that people were looking at Blake Baggett with accusatory eyes.

Why? Two years in a row, according to one rival team member, Baggett's results faltered after he was named in Team USA for the Motocross of Nations. The accusation, although nobody would say it publicly, was that Baggett's results must have been getting worse because he stopped using some sort of PEDs (Performance-Enhancing Drugs) knowing he may be tested at the Motocross of Nations.

The thing is, the observation about his results was actually true at the conclusion of the Steel City National. Team USA was announced at Southwick – round nine. He won Southwick with a 3-1 score, but at Unadilla, he went 3-5, matching his worst two-moto points total of the season. And at Steel City, he absolutely didn't look anything like the Blake Baggett we've seen all season. All season in fact, he was making late-race charges and pulling out wins late in motos, but at Steel City he looked listless, like someone else completely.

In 2011, following the Team USA announcement at Unadilla (also round nine), Baggett went 9-6 at Southwick, then 5-8 at Steel City, and then 2-3 at the Pala finale.

So there did seem to be some kind of a pattern, at first glance. However, in 2011, Baggett had nothing like the season he had in 2012 going 1-1 at High Point (round three) for example, then going 7-7 the following round at Budds Creek. He was very inconsistent anyway. But add 2011's poor end-of-season results to his 2012 results, and it was definitely enough to get people talking.

At first, I thought they might be right. It made sense. But as I began to think about it, I realised why the hypothesis didn't hold water. First off, in 2011 and 2012, Baggett knew well before round nine that he was likely going to be picked to represent Team USA. In 2011, he was in a battle with Dean Wilson (UK – or Canada) and Tyla Rattray (RSA) for the championship, making him clearly the top U.S. 250cc (MX2) racer. And in 2012, obviously he was leading the championship the entire season, again making him very clearly the top U.S. 250cc (MX2) racer. So why wait until the announcement to stop using PEDs, as the accusation would have it? It seems like the announcement would have little to do with the PED usage, although it could be a coincidental issue of timing, depending on how long it takes for the PEDs to leave your system.

But here's the bigger point: If, and I mean if, racers are using Performance-Enhancing Drugs, the chances are that the chief drug would be EPO (erythropoietin). That's the drug most commonly used in cycling, and many trainers in the USA have backgrounds in cycling. It's also the drug that would do the most to help racers, especially outdoors, to come up with a lot more endurance late in the motos, because EPO increases your red-blood-cell count by as much as 70 percent. Red blood cells are the cells that carry oxygen from your lungs to your muscles. Oxygen is what makes your muscles work. An increase like that in red blood cells will definitely lead to an increase in cardiovascular performance, and a huge increase in muscle endurance during heavy cardiovascular exercise.

However, EPO can only be reliably found by blood tests and even then, typically all that can be found is the person has a higher red-blood-cell count than normal. There are urine tests that can catch certain types of synthetic EPO as well but they are much less reliable, and synthetic EPO is nearly identical to the natural hormone that also supports the growth and maintenance of red blood cells in blood.

According to the FIM Anti-Doping Code, section 5.3.1, blood may be used to detect prohibited substances but as it's usually just for screening it will have no consequence to the racer other than to identify the racer for a follow-up urine test.

In addition to this the cost of blood testing, as opposed to urine testing, is much, much higher, and this is a price the promoter must pay.

Then, add in the fact that EPO is only detectable in the blood or urine for three days or so after administration, while the effects of EPO – the drastic increase in red-blood-cell count – lasts for as much as a month, depending on how the administration of the drug was cycled.

Add these things up and it's incredibly unlikely that Baggett, or anyone for that matter, would be caught using EPO, even if they were using, and even if they were tested. And the likelihood of being tested at all, considering it's random, is also very slim.

Finally though, Baggett shut down the rumours at Elsinore as he absolutely murdered the field in the first moto, despite extreme heat that was perhaps the worst it has been all season. And in moto two, when it was slightly cooler thanks to a breeze that came through and blew out the humidity, he still nearly chased Barcia down for the win late in the moto. It was typical Baggett. It seems like perhaps his late-season problems were more mental than physical, but he shook them off at the finale to take his first professional title.



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GREAT SWAG UP FOR GRABS WITH DIRTZONE

Every month we're going to be trawling through the pages of our dirt bike-devoted social networking site **dirtZone** searching for informed comment, intelligent insight, pretty pics and other stuff that just flat-out makes us laugh – and then handing out prizes to the **dirtZone** members who've posted it up. If you've got something to share then point your PC at www.dirtbikerider.com, sign up or log in to **dirtZone** and get posting! There's 5,000 loyalty points for every post we publish...

TWEET OF THE MONTH



@DanielMcCanney
Can't beat a front cover on
@TMXNews and a good
review in @dbrmagazine

TOP TEN NEWS STORIES

- 1: ORANGE SUNDAY
- 2: RED BULL PRO NATIONALS AT CULHAM PARK HAS A RESHUFFLE
- 3: CROCKARD SUBS FOR ROWSON AT LPE KAWASAKI
- 4: SEARLE SIGNS FOR KAWASAKI CL8 IN MX1
- 5: 2013 YAMAHA MX BIKES ANNOUNCED
- 6: SCRAMBLY FUN
- 7: TIFFY'S THROTTLE TWISTER!
- 8: SEARLE DOUBLES AMAZING MATTERLEY
- 9: DUNGEY TAKES US TITLE
- 10: KNIGHTER TO MISS 2012 ISDE

VIDEO OF THE MONTH

Uploaded by our very own **dirtZone** geek, Andrew (Hank) Hill. Brett Cue shows us how whips should be whipped. We don't know Brett's background, but that's just fine with us - so long as you just keep on keeping on wit doze whips Brettmeister!



Muc-Off

If your **dirtZone** post appears on this page you'll win a one-litre bottle of marvellous Muc-Off bike cleaner* – unless you live overseas in which case we'll send you some of Muc-Off's brilliant brushes and wipes instead...

*One bottle per member per month



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

FIND J-LAW'S LUNCHBOX AND WIN SOME AWESOME KNOX ORYX GLOVES...

Since Sutty sneaked away with J-Law's lunchbox at the Bassenthwaite GP a month or five ago Jamie's been a little grumpy about it. In fact he's so peeved he's hooked up with his long-term sponsor Knox to offer every DBR reader who spots his lunchbox the chance to win a pair of his favourite Knox gloves!

Knox knows that getting injured sucks which is why the Cockermouth protection specialist goes the extra mile to produce the most protective products around. Jamie knows this too and he's a massive fan of the Oryx gloves that are

lightweight and comfortable but have SPS Inside – that's Knox's patented Scaphoid and Palm Protection System.

To be in with a chance of winning a pair of Oryx gloves all you have to do is let us know on which page J-Law's lunchbox is hiding. When you've figured out if it's on page **A: 45, B: 56, C: 17, D: none of the above**, log on to our website and follow the competitions link to **dirtZone**. Then fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The competition closes on **September 6** with the first correct randomly-drawn entry winning the Knox gloves.



MAC211

RUMOUR MILL!

BILLY TALKS POST-SEASON RUMOURS OF A UK RETURN AND PREPPING FOR THE AUSSIE SX SEASON...

Words by **Billy MacKenzie** Photo by **Matty Muir**

There has been a few people asking what I'm up to next year and the truth be told right now, I don't know! For people hearing the rumour that I'm coming home, there is a hint of truth behind it as I was chatting to a professionally run Honda team in the British paddock, but there just wasn't enough hours in that week for me to make a decision and in the end we both had to say thanks but no thanks. It may be one of those decisions I will regret in the future as it was really the only option I have at this moment in time, and when I was visualising making a return home it all looked pretty sweet...but I have the SX series to finish over here and that has to be my main focus right now.

I have set myself up pretty well since being in Australia. As you can imagine, shifting countries is no easy task and it's taken this long to finally feel settled with my own motocross and supercross tracks within 40mins of where I'm staying. I feel like I've been able to put myself into a position where I've never been able to in my whole professional career.

The last time I had everything at my doorstep to do my job properly I was living at home winning British schoolboy championships! I had my good friend Johnny Hamilton's insane sand track only 10mins drive from my dad's house but since then I have been chasing the motocross dream all over Europe and now around the world. I've

basically tried to replicate what I had when I was younger but with sunshine, and I think I've got it! So to come home at this stage, just after I've worked things out would be a bit of a waste of time. I feel like I've got all the tools right now to possibly be the best athlete I've ever been.

I've been putting in a lot of laps down the supercross track on the new 2013 Kawasaki and it's all going really well, it feels like I have finally earned my supercross badge and it's the first time I'm feeling confident about hitting the supercross track for round one.

I got a bit of pressure on my shoulders to do well, I'm stuck in limbo between missing out on UK deals and waiting on my SX results to warrant me a ride in Australia. I'm just going with the flow and doing what feels right instead of making any rash decisions, so hopefully something will work out and I'll get to keep riding my dirtbike for a few years yet! After all, it's been an injury-free end of season, so I just gotta keep the train going!

Whatever happens between now and the end of supercross tho, I'm defo gonna come back for Christmas holidays and enjoy some family time. Each time we've been back it's only been flying visits so it will be nice to spend a month or two and have a nice break. But who knows, I could be staying yet!

MAC211
dirtbikerider 27



SPOTLIGHT ON... JOE WRIGHT #367

CENTRAL GROUP MX2 CHAMPION

D.O.B: 30-8-89 HOMETOWN: COVEN NR WOLVERHAMPTON

MACHINE: KTM SX 150/250 #367 CLUB: WALSALL MCC

DBR: Congratulations on winning the 2012 MX2 Central Group Championship on a two-stroke.

How come you are now sporting a 250cc smoker in MX2?

JW: The SX150 is a brilliant machine to ride. I won the Central group two-stroke area qualifier in April on it but soon after winning the group MX2 championship mine hit the buffers big style. As I will be racing in the full AMCA TS championship next year I thought it would be a good idea to upgrade early and get used to the extra oomph of the bigger engine. I upgraded at the end of June and at the Pontrilas Two-Stroke National round where I finished fifth overall. At the Walterstone round in September I claimed fourth overall – I was pretty pleased with both efforts – but I think I could have taken a podium spot with a bit more luck. All things considered it's looking good for next year.

DBR: Are you a real hardcore confirmed two-stroke racer then?

JW: Definitely, it's been two-strokes all the way for me. I have tried a banger just briefly on a practise track but to be honest I hated it and actually it felt boring to ride.

DBR: Looking back down the years how has your racing career stacked up?

JW: I started racing when I was eight back in the nineties and things were a bit different then at youth level. I completed the BSMA 2000 season at Junior 65cc level and finished twelfth overall. I had good club and BSMA finals results all through my youth days and then moved into the AMCA in 2008. In 2010 I had a real bad accident breaking a wrist and a leg – it was something really stupid like 30 bones that got mashed in total. That one set me back a bit but it's all good now.

DBR: What's the plan from here going forward?

JW: I'll see the AMCA season out then move over to the Wilden winter series getting into shape for a good tilt at the smoker championship next year.

DBR: Do you think you will see your career out competing with the AMCA?

JW: Yeah, I have to say the set-up suits me, it's good quality competition which doesn't exactly break the bank. The AMCA has everything I need I just need to get a few sponsors on board and crack that championship next year.



Experts Andy Marchant, Duncan Winnall and Kyle Stringer. Easy boys!



MX2 Expert Jack Vincent



MX2 Junior Jason Morton

WOLVES UNITED!

PROUD LIVE TV HISTORY IN THE MIDLANDS FOR WOLVERHAMPTON AND DISTRICT AUTO CLUB INCLUDES LIVE TV BROADCASTS!

Words by Mike Gurney Photos by Mike Woods

DBR rocked up at Dunston Moto Park early in September taking a shifty at the Central AMCA group in the capable hands of the Wolverhampton and District Auto Club. On the day the club presented their "Wrong Way Wound" meeting and a raft of quality performances from the Wolves boys handily "going the right way around" was headed by Andy Marchant.

Andy routed the combined Experts in thunderous style as Kyle Marshall claimed the overall win in MX2 Seniors and it was Ian Ryles who triumphed in MX1 Juniors making it a hat-trick of home wins. AMCA 'Area 4' as the Central group is known, contains many long-standing old-school outfits based in and around the amateur West Mid's heartland and with more than fifty years logged, WDAC is one of the very proudest.

Formed in 1946 the club began life under the guidance of George Robertson running

meetings at "the Grotto", near Trysull, Staffs and holding club night meets at the local Bell pub. After losing some members to the South Staffs Car Club WDAC shut down for a few years but reformed in 1958 now running scrambles at Kingswinford and Featherstone. In the 1960's the club took over the Dawley (Telford) track from Walsall MCC and this sparked a golden period which saw them host the first live televised AMCA scramble in 1964. That was followed with moves to Perton and then on to Pattingham (both South Staffs tracks) where IMBA Internationals were run in '68 and '70.

In more recent times club Chairman Mike Penn instigated a successful move to Hungry Hill Farm near Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire and since losing that circuit a couple of years back Dunston has become their new home. The club handily owns a selection of heavy plant moving gear and the new base at Penkridge, Staffs has been transformed – even to the extent of

installing the watering system previously used at Hungry Hill. No more dust at Dunston then! The work goes on through the winter with more improvements in the pipeline (pardon the pun).

Early and notable club officials include Don Green, Howard Thompson, Mike Frost, Mary and Neil O'Connor, Bob Bullock, Steve Horsley and June Morris (club Secretary for 18 years from 1987 to 2005). The current officials include Mike Penn, Brian Clee, Steve Harvey and Malcolm Palmer. "Wolverhampton & District Auto Club is a progressive institution with over 30 valued members and we are well known for not being work-shy. Wolves are proud of the achievements of Jack Cox in the AMCA championship and the Masters (MX2) series and want to note that Jack spends as much time at club meetings and work parties as other members. At WDAC we are firmly committed to the AMCA ethos and we look forward to a successful future." Says club secretary Malcolm Palmer.

CENTRAL GROUP

BURTON & DISTRICT MCC

Secretary: Tara Garner
Contact: 07917 691265
Club night: Tuesdays evenings (fortnightly), Henhurst Social Club, Burton, Staffs

CANNOCK MCC

Secretary: Mark Harding
Contact: 01922 711965
Club night: Thursdays (weekly) 9pm, Yates Social Club, Lime Lane, Norton Canes

COALVILLE MCC

Secretary: Lawrence Palmer
Contact: 07970 648426
Club night: Wednesday (weekly) 8:30pm, The Rangers Club, Loughbororugh Road, Thringstone, LE67 8LR

DERBY SPORTING MCC

Secretary: James Walker
Contact: www.derbymx.co.uk 07957 855452
Club Meeting: Tuesdays (weekly) 8:30pm, Haslams, Haslams Lane, Darley Abbey, DE22 1EB

KINVER AUTO CLUB LTD

Secretary: Craig Chamberlain
Contact: 07796 407066
Club Meeting: Tuesdays (weekly) 8:30pm, Laurels, Colley Gate, B63 2BY

MIDLAND SOCIAL MCC

Secretary: Mrs Lucille Adams
Contact: 07966 520671
Club Meeting: Tuesdays (weekly) 8:45pm, Cat & Fiddle, Great Barr

MOSELEY & DISTRICT MCC

Secretary: Colin Huckerby
Contact: 0121 624 5695
Club Meeting: Tuesdays (weekly), Tally Ho Sports&Conference Centre, Pershore Road, Edgbaston, B5 7RN

POLESWORTH MCC

Secretary: Louise Cooper
Contact: www.polesworthmx.co.uk 07527 899914
Club Meeting: Thursdays (weekly) 9pm, Gamecock Inn, Birchmoor

STRATFORD PYRAMIDS MCC

Secretary: Ernie Cook
Contact: 07770 471825
Club Meeting: Wednesdays (weekly) 9pm, Hockley Heath Social Club, Stratford Road, B94 5NH

TEME VALLEY MCC

Secretary: David Morris
Contact: 07775 883320
Club Meeting: Wednesday (weekly) 9pm, The Stagborough Arms, Lower Lickhill Road, DY13 8UQ

WALSALL MCC

Secretary: Gordon Mycock
Contact: 01543 375819
Club Meeting: Thursday (weekly) 8:45pm, St. Francis Social Club, Walsall

WOLVERHAMPTON & DISTRICT AUTO CLUB

Secretary: Malcolm Palmer
Contact: 07808 078115
Club Meeting: Tuesdays (weekly) 9pm, British Oak, Cannock Road, Willenhall



DANGEROUS

HOLESHTOT KING!

MORE EURO TRAVEL TROUBLES THAN YOU CAN THROW A STICK AT AND SOME HOT HOLESHTOT ACTION AS LEE HONES IN ON THE YEAR END

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by Mike Woods

It seems like we've not long wrote the last column with how busy things have got racing – I could sit here for about three weeks just typing what's happened! I'll start by saying we had a race in France which was just mental. On the way the turbo in the truck sh*t itself just outside Dover (luckily we weren't on the ferry or in France). With a huge thanks to Dave Meakin we got relayed back to Reading, and four hours on the phone later, we managed to grab a hire van, chucked all our bits in there. Luckily we had the Crewe family, who were following us over to give me some support, stopped at the side of the road with us and we chucked some drinks and food in their fridge. Truly life savers!

Once we had loaded both vans, laughed about the fact we could have been travelling to a European race with everything in the back of a rental car/bikes and all, we finally made it onto the ferry and headed for the track. We sorted the hotel out in our best English/French/English sign language then headed to the circuit to check it out.

I've never seen anything quite like it. Half the track was covered in barbed wire fence! The IMBA official's made them cut it all down, sort their lives out and what-not ready for Sunday.

Sunday went mega! I qualified good and hooked-up three mega starts and finished with three fourth places. So unlucky not to have a podium in each race but that's how things go.

The trip back was hilarious too. We dropped the hire van back to Ashford and there were six of us in a three-seater, short wheel based van, plus two Kawasaki 450s, two beds, all my kit and also all six people's food, clothes and clober all rammed in. Two of us on chairs sat in the back the other on a cool box driving flat-out to get home at around two am. I fell asleep but woke up with a Maxxis tyre print on my face! We then had the penultimate race at Norley, Cheshire for the AMCA British Champs the week after but luckily we had the lorry back. The day went good. Although back-markers were causing us all hassle when we came to lap them. My suspension guy, KB Racing, had the bike dialled that day and we got a well-earned win in the second moto, plus a 3-2 in the other races to hit second overall on the day. Now it's all to play for last round at Hawkstone Park (October 6/7) and I can't wait.

The Thursday after Norley we headed abroad again to Switzerland for the IMBA round. It was the track I'd won my second European title at so I was pretty

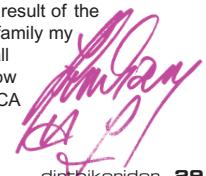
pumped to go back there. Of course nothing's changed there either: 20-odd thousand people watching, huge rider line-ups in each class and a full line-up of ladies racing. What more could you want? Well we had Buster Yarranton to keep us entertained. Chad Yarranton got the call into the GB IMBA team with Jamie Dobson and they hooked-up and travelled together and met us in Germany. Literally within seconds, Buster is telling the locals that he had won the war! He had the fruit out from the salad carts and was juggling them keeping everyone entertained. Such a funny dude!!!

In the morning we set off again and around 30mins later we got to the Swiss boarder and got pulled for not having the tax to use their motorways. So did Chad but unfortunately the Yarrantons' passion wagon needs to be hot-started. So you can imagine the look on the Police boarder control's face when Buster's out the front giving it large with a live wire direct to the battery! They then proceed to ask him where was he from. He said England. They then jumped back and said "ENGLAND?????" Whilst looking at the van... "REALLY?????" It was as if they were saying are you sure you haven't just stolen it? Buster had us in stitches all weekend with that!

We got set-up in the rain but when Sunday came it was bright blue skies and everyone was pumped to go ride and give it 100%! I qualified third and so it gave me a mega choice of the gate. Three holeshots! Yes Sir!!!! With two Belgium's and a German going for the title, and also the Swiss federation chucked in a wringer to try and steal the joy, it was all going on. I ran to 4th in the first moto and was sat in 5th in the second moto but a Belgium dude got taken out by two back-markers having a massive crash on a really fast part of the track. His bike was totalled! So I went 4-4 and wanted better in the next heat!

I took another holey and got my head focused! Vincent Collet, a Belgian dude, passed me and we put the hammer down to get some distance between us and third. The IMBA leader going into that race went down huge, dislocating his shoulder, and also got concussion – I hope he heals up fast. So when finally the last lap came and I got my best result of the year. I was so happy! My team, my family my suspension and engine guys have all worked so hard to get this result! Now bring on Hawkstone for the last AMCA Brit Champs Round.....

England..... REALLY?????


dmbikerider 29

MX2 Senior
Kyle Marshall



VENHILL

QUICK ACTION THROTTLE

Motorcycle control specialists Venhill have a history of producing dual-action twist grips. The new 600A offers a choice of fast and medium throttle action settings, allowing you to tailor response to suit. CNC machined aluminium body and aluminium rotor and cable guide wheel, the twist grip tube is durable plastic and can be changed if damaged. On the fastest setting there is 68° of rotation (taking up 36mm of the cable), while on the regular setting there is 80°, delivering a slightly quicker action than most OE twist grips. Settings can be changed quickly and easily by hooking the throttle cable to alternative positions on the throttle rotor, so no fiddly procedures or special tools required. The cable can also be changed quickly, without removing the housing from the bar. Suitable for most off-road bikes with 22mm handlebars and a single throttle cable.

Price: £58.80

Supplier: www.venhill.co.uk

Contact: 01306 885111



DRAGON

NFX GOGGLES

Hot off the press! The NFX is Dragon's new patented frameless goggle aimed at maximising peripheral vision for the rider helping you see the racer showing you a wheel in turn sooner, helping you shut the door faster!

The innovation doesn't end there, they also boast the first ever quick change lens system. Simply by pressing at one corner you can completely remove the lens very quickly, and either clean it or clip a new one into place.

They look awesome too don't they with a range of ionised lenses, plus a bonus clear lens with every goggle you buy.

If comfort and fit is as important to you as style then, as with all Dragon goggles, quad foam makes the goggle/face interaction a snug one.

Price: TBA

Supplier: www.apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190



ALIAS

A1 RACE KIT

More Geico Honda team gear from Alias this month, following the classy tees last, as the 2013 A1 race kit hits the UK. The A1 jersey and pants come in a range of colour options and sizes to suit your steed. Weighing in at only 1.45lbs the A1 pant is crafted with laser cut vented thigh panels, adjustable waist closures and large leather knee panels. The jerseys are quite obviously lighter! The fit and durability of Alias kit is of course race proven with riders like Eli Tomac, Justin Barcia and (cut fan-fair) British Grand Prix 2012 point scorer and DBR tester Geoff Walker!!!!

Price: Jersey £45 Pants £145

(Geico yellow £155)

Supplier: www.aliasmx.com

Contact: 0870 2438817

SDOC

CORROSION PROTECTION SPRAY

We've featured Sdoc products before but at this time of year, when the weather's getting worse and you're maybe putting the bike in the garage for longer periods of time, a bit of corrosion protection ain't no bad thang.

This 300ml can of Sdoc is for protecting all metal parts against salt and water damage. It's smart stuff too, capable of 'self-healing', which sounds a bit new-age hippie to us, but basically means it re-closes immediately after being touched to guard against salt and water ingress. It also lubricates and displaces moisture and now has improved penetrating properties – which also sounds good!

Price: £13.98

Supplier: www.sdoc100.co.uk

Contact: 01256 704909



GAERNE

KIT BAG

What can you say about a kit bag other than it is made of fabric tough enough to put up with being chucked in and out of a van a million times? Can it stand being caked in mud, left in the garage/back of the van for a week (or two). Is it then washable? And is there a separate boot pocket?

Tick all those boxes for Gaerne's kit bag and then ask yourself one question? Do you need to keep using that stinking, old bag you've had for ages or isn't it about time you got yourself one of these not at all badly priced Gaerne ones? OK, so you may not sport that particular brand of boot but do you care? Gaerne's kit bags come in blue or yellow as shown.

Price: £40

Supplier: www.mrsldt.co.uk

Contact: 01423 772885

USWE HYDRATION PACK

'Official hydration pack partner of the AMA's 2012 ISDE effort sounds grand but you've gotta believe the US ISDE team wouldn't have headed off to Saxony without a fully-functioning hydration pack. 30 US riders are running the Swedish-designed and built packs which come in a range of sizes: a neatly proportioned 0.5l 'Handsfree' model to the 2.5l back-pack with space for tools n'all.'

The ergonomic design of the shoulder and belt straps mean the pack stays put when the going gets rough. The smart tool pocket is removable from the pack if you're just wanting the juices. There are options for quick refill and different sized/coloured bladders and handsfree helmet-mounted tubing.

Price: from £69

Supplier: www.uswe-sports.com

Contact: +46 706-35 21 06



SHARK

SX2 CLAWS HELMET

French helmet manufacturer shark has a strong following in its native country but the off-road lids have a quieter life over the channel. We're not sure why as lids like this SX2 look good and perform up there with the best.

Shark are hot on crash protection and safety so don't let the strong graphics and fancy shapes trick you into thinking this is all form and no function. Thermoplastic injected shell is aerodynamically designed to help the flow of air around the lid. Particular attention has been given to the peak (or visor) which aids air flow at speed and allows head movement – so it lets you look over your shoulder while you're pulling a your bum whips! Removable lining is de rigueur, as they say in France, and the SX2 comes in five different designs more are on the way for 2013.

Price: £199.99

Supplier: www.nevis.uk.com

Contact: 01425 478936



VENHILL TOOL KIT

Venhill have introduced a new version of their portable sockets and drivers kit with 50% more tools. 50% I tells ya! At 950g they're designed as stash tools on the bike or in a backpack.

The VT47 has 1/4" square drives in the end and also side, offering the option for both T and straight drives. Inside the tough carrying pouch five 175mm long double way bits provide hex heads in 3mm, 4mm and 5mm (straight head and ball end), slotted 4.0mm x 5.5mm screw drivers and Phillips in types #1 and #2. Plus a 7mm Torx screwdriver. There are also five 180mm long sockets in 6mm, 8mm, 10mm, 12mm and 13mm sizes and adaptor for 6mm square socket drives. All drivers and socket are made from heat-treated chrome alloy steel.

Price: £29.13

Supplier: www.venhill.co.uk

Contact: 01306 885111



ANSWER APEX KNEE AND ELBOW GUARDS

Answer clothing race pants and jerseys are familiar enough to us but the new range of elbow and knee guards is new to our doors. The affordable range is short and sweet – offering protection for adults and children, so coming in two sizes. Designed to fit inside your race kit – Answer would rather it was Answer kit of course – both have high impact plastic outer shells, with a nice amount of padding and are CE-approved for safety. A great stocking filler Apico think and who could argue.

Price: Elbow guards £20.00 (children £18.00) Knee guards £17.00 (kids £14.00)

Supplier: www.apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190



KNOX

ARMOURED JERSEY

Combining CE-approved protection with a flexible and breathable sports fabric, the Venture Shirt is designed for MX, enduro, MTB, snowboarding or whatever. It's a great solution to uncomfortable armour and a lot more versatile than many full-on protection 'systems'. Made in Knox's Lake District factory from British made fabrics, the zip-fronted shirt uses Meryl Lycra to regulate body temperature and wick-away sweat. CE-approved Knox Flexiform+ armour is standard in the shoulders and elbows, plus a certified back protector. A chest protector is available. It's machine washable and sized S-XXL.

Price: £109.99

Supplier: www.knox-armour.co.uk

Contact: 01900 825825

MAXIMA

SUPER-M SYNTHETIC OIL

Super-M is a high performance 2T (SAE 30w) blend of clean-burning oil, synthetic polyolester, polybutene, anti-wear compounds with a new additive to keep rings, valves and exhaust tracts "carbon free". 2000 Centistoke Ester, provides further anti-scuff protection and aids corrosion protection. Its 'smokeless' formula claims environmental-friendliness too! 4T synthetic oil (SAE 10w40) uses new anti-shear additives for oil stability in 4T engines with integrated gearboxes and reduces wear, friction, temperature, oil consumption and extends drain intervals. Get it!

Price: £9.99 4T £11.99 2T for 1 litre

Supplier: www.racefx.co.uk

Contact: 0845 4501448



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*Herlings isn't the
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TEENAGE KICKS

**ITALIAN, WORLD CHAMPION, A MOTORCYCLE RACING STAR - SOUND FAMILIAR?
DBR CHECKS OUT THE LATEST LATIN RACING SENSATION KIARA FONTANESI...**

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

It is easy for Kiara Fontanesi to smile. As a fun-loving and open 18-year-old from Parma, 'Fonta' has that pleasant and airy Italian nonchalance about her.

This year of course she has had plenty of reasons to crack a grin. Five Grand Prix wins from seven (there are only eight in the fifth edition of the FIM Women's Motocross World Championship), ten chequered flags from a possible fourteen and a scorecard that shows that she hadn't dropped out of the top three in any of the races from April to September, from Holland to Slovakia on her YZ250F Yamaha. Oh, and she won the world championship too!

We catch-up in her modest motorhome at Matterley Basin for the British Grand Prix, site of the first ever MXGP Festival where the women's series is one of ten world and European classes gathered together at one circuit across four days. The last time I'd interviewed Kiara was in 2010 and we needed the help of a translator (her English was still better than my Italian) but now the extra years, more confidence and a broader experience of life thanks to endless travelling hours with her ever-present family and fellow racing elder sibling Luca, means she chats happily and strives to express her feelings even when the vocabulary doesn't come so easily.

Kiara is relatively small in stature compared to the likes of Steffi Laier – the outgoing champion for the past three years – and current chief rival Livia Lancelot but has a build that betrays her profession. That said the youngster is no rippling ball of muscle and her unusual training techniques (read on) mean she is well toned and flexible – an athlete you could say as much as a bike racer. She threw herself into the Monster Energy photoshoot the previous day, even for some of the more risqué shots and certainly knew how to strike a pose. There is very much a girly element to Kiara, even if her skill and speed on two wheels would put many male racers across the continent to shame.

DBR: 2012 has been almost perfect hasn't it? What's been the difference compared to your performances in the past?

KF: I'm really happy with my season but it has not been perfect. I didn't win in France!

It has been great what I'm doing. The big difference is through gaining more race experience each season and knowing what to do on the track and in different situations.

The first year in the world championship was not easy, everything was different and new, even the language! I started my learning process in 2009 and I'm growing up and getting more mature and better on the bike every year.

DBR: That first victory in the sand of Lierop for the last round of 2009 really was your springboard to the top level...

KF: I didn't expect to win in Lierop but I had been training in Holland and Belgium for five weeks before the race and I learned the value of preparation. When I started the training there was another girl with me and I was two seconds a lap slower than her. At the Grand Prix I lapped her; so I saw how I could make such a big step. I feel good in the sand anyway.

DBR: You seem to come from a strong family committed to you and the sport...

KF: I think I am lucky to always have my parents with me. Not because they make my racing happen – I can do that thanks to people like Monster and Yamaha – but they are a big help. The support from a family is so important I think. It is a unit all pulling and working together. It is a very strong thing. If you wanted to do something and your parents weren't really in agreement then it would be so difficult. My family are really active and they are there for me.

DBR: Italy is renowned for its passion for motorcycles and racing but how did you get into it all?

KF: I got my first bike at three and a half. My parents said I could ride it when I was a bit older and I started to cry! I really wanted to try, so on the first day they let me ride and I was already able to do it on my own, without any training wheels. It was something that came naturally and I think I have MX and off-road in my blood. I never needed lessons or people telling me what I should do on the bike. There was never any coaching or instruction and I just picked it up fast. I decided to do it for fun when I was younger and step-by-step it became my

job and career.

Artistic gymnastics was my first sport and motocross was just for fun. I was training for sport everyday. I would go to school and some days ride the bike and other days do gymnastics from 4-9...and then I had to get home, shower and study! It was not easy. When I saw that gymnastics would require total dedication, even more than going to school, and motocross was something that came so easily to me in comparison, I decided what I wanted to do and told my parents.

DBR: How old were you then?

KF: I was only eleven. They said to me 'that's your decision, but you pick up the phone to the coach and tell him you want to stop'.

DBR: Was that difficult to do?

KF: Really, really difficult! It was a serious business and I was scared to call. Artistic gymnastics is a very hard sport and I was so young. I was afraid to do it by halves...it turned out OK because my coach then is actually my trainer now! I started riding a lot more but I wasn't training off the bike; just racing. I did the Italian championship and the fun approach worked – my dad never pushed me to work hard off the bike but just to enjoy it and develop.

DBR: That's why your parents were cool, because taking you to the gym was probably a lot easier than driving across the country, spending money on gas etc...

KF: That's right and that's why I said parents almost have to want 'it' too. My brother was riding and I never asked for a bike, but they bought it and saw I was really into it. My races became more frequent and the bikes changed from 65 to 85 to 125. In 2007 I had the opportunity to ride in the USA and my parents did not say 'yes' straightaway but when they agreed we started to look around for some sponsors. When we made it possible we made it over, I won and when I came back to Europe there were more possibilities.

DBR: Gymnastics and motocross...are they worlds apart or are there similarities there in terms of the prep? >>



The WMX field off the start with Natalie Kane (44) alongside Kiara (8)

KF: Of course they are different but they are a little bit the same. I think I train in a different way to the traditional methods people use anyway. I went back to my gymnastics trainer at the end of 2009 because up until then I was only riding the bike and not really focusing on anything else, even the first year in the GPs was like playtime for me! At the end of '09 we decided to get serious and even now I'm not running, cycling or going orthodox. I just go through the routine for artistic gymnastics. I'm not walking on beams or things like that but I'm stretching, moving and doing aerobic work in circuits. So far I've never had a problem on the bike and I think it works very well.

DBR: Was that period building up to 2009 a big step for you? I don't mean just in terms of speed but in finding sponsors and becoming 'professional'.

KF: It was but it accelerated in 2009 when I won in Lierop. In my first year I was taking a few eighths, ninths...it wasn't bad but also not that good. When I won in Holland everybody could see I could be very good. 2007 and the USA was important because I rode Loretta Lynns and was training in Florida but if I look towards 2009 then that year was more crucial to my career.

DBR: That time in the U.S. must have been interesting...a young Italian girl who hardly spoke English in the depths of American racing...

KF: Yeah! It was really hard. Especially because hardly anyone in my family speaks English and I was thirteen I didn't speak anything either. I studied at school but the level I have now is mainly through having to talk in paddocks. I got a bike from KTM for the U.S. but it was me, the family, the car, the tent and the bike! We didn't even have any tools! Everything was completely new over there and it was hard to take it all on board. I had a promise from KTM in the end that

if I qualified for the final then I would have their support. I won the first moto and suddenly they made me feel like a Pro KTM rider!

DBR: So how many years are you with Yamaha now?

KF: This is the fourth year.

DBR: Has the 2012 YZ250F been important to you?

KF: Yeah. I think every year I received something from Rinaldi and YRRD (Yamaha Rinaldi Research and Development) that helped a lot. The bike itself has changed quite a bit, especially from 2011 to 2012. The YRRD kit boosted the power right across the range and made the bike faster. The new model had a new frame which pushed the back of the bike up more and meant that it turned better and quicker. It was not a huge change but it was an important one. I really like the bike – not because I'm a Yamaha rider – but because I get on well with every part of it; the engine, chassis and suspension that Fabio from the Monster Energy Yamaha factory team has prepared for me this year.

I say to Michele Rinaldi now "if I'm here then it's because of you". In 2008 and 2009 he asked my Dad if I wanted to ride the world championship. Maybe I could have had another possibility but that was the right call at the right time. He is like a second Dad to me and it's because of him I'm in the world championship. Year by year he could watch my development and we never did bad things or made bad moves and the support was always good.

DBR: Italy has won titles now in MX1 GP, MX2 GP and now WMX GP with three different riders. Did the efforts of people like Cairoli and Philippaerts help you get noticed a little bit?

KF: I think the Italian mentality is a little strange. The biggest thing in Italy is soccer and



motocross is fighting to become known because it doesn't appear on TV so much. It used to be at a point where, say, the last rider in MotoGP could walk into a disco and people would recognise him and then Tony [Cairol] would go in and nobody would blink. I think Tony has some good management for his image now and he is getting popular. Overall I don't think being Italian has carried any kind of advantage. I'm getting a few calls from the press now and people like Rai TV and Sport Italia and it is getting better each year.

DBR: Inside motocross circles do you feel a bit of a star now? Your profile must be going up...

KF: I think we still need to work a lot on this but I am getting more recognised. This winter I went snowboarding and I had my helmet on but someone still came up to me to ask if I was Kiara.

DBR: Maybe riders need to work on their profile and promotion more. Of course the focus is on results, training and preparation, but things like PR and social media duties are becoming more important to increase awareness...

KF: I think it is really important. The more work you do on this aspect of your career then I feel the longer your career will be, and then even after you have finished racing there is still a place for you in the sport. You could be a winner but only so many people will know about it if they don't know you. What is important is how you are as a person.

DBR: How do you feel about Women's motocross now?

KF: I think I'm the only one who likes more to be racing with the MX3 series compared to being with MX1! This is only the fourth year of the championship for me and I've been two years with MX1 and two with MX3. Perhaps it is still too early for me to say, but what I feel is that when we raced with MX1 nobody was really watching. Even if we were close to the teams

Fancy some corn on the cob? Kiara contemplates life on the farm



Fontanesi clinched the WMX World Championship title at Matterley Basin

and riders and the big stars of the sport we were just a sideshow, the last thing anyone thinks about. With MX3 the paddock is more like a family and there is more attention from the organisers, fans and media. The relationship with the organisers is good and everybody can talk.

DBR: But the question is whether it can survive...

KF: I think it can. Maybe in the past some girls were on the big MX1/MX2 teams but in the end they still made the trip with the MX3 calendar. I don't see there being a big change or difference in racing with MX1 or MX3. Perhaps for some girls it is more important and the races are closer but for those really making their own way it is doable.

DBR: You battled with Steffi Laier in 2011 and with the German absent from the series you've been totally dominant. Does part of you still wishes she was there to defeat this season?

KF: For sure. She's a champion and she's fast so it would have been nice to battle with her

but I'm not the type of person that thinks 'if she was here I might not have done it'. What can I say? We had some great battles last year and I have a lot of respect for her. I've become better and she is not old but maybe she didn't have the speed or the hunger like she did four years ago. That's life and for sure there will be another young girl who will want to knock me away from being number one. Actually I had a message from Steffi on the morning I won the championship and she said 'show everybody who is the champ' and I never expected that from her because she's quite a closed person but it was really nice.

DBR: What's the story behind your chosen number eight?

KF: There is no serious reason for it. My brother started to ride before me and he had number eight on the bike. So when I had mine as a kid my parents just stuck the same number on it. It's a family number! I also come across things often like sitting at a table '8' in a restaurant or staying in a hotel where the room has an '8'! I will never change my number, not even for a number 1.

profile



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profile

**Homeboy Bobryshev has
come a long way from his
old school hangouts**



AT HOME WITH YEVGENY KOKKISHEV

THIS SUMMER'S MXGP OF RUSSIA GLIMPSED A DIFFERENT SIDE OF THE SPORT OUTSIDE THE DOMINANT CONFINES IN THE REST OF EUROPE AND THE US. WHO BETTER TO EXPLAIN THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES THAN THE WORLD'S FASTEST RUSSIAN...

Words by Jenni Dick Photos by Sarah Gutierrez



Although Russian racer Evgeny Bobryshev is a well-known face since his surprise success during his first year in the MX1 class, for many it was an unknown quantity making the trip to the GP of Russia this year (at least it was for anyone too young to be around for the last visit in 2002!).

Traveling the world with the GP circus means the rituals of getting to and from the many countries becomes the norm but Russia is some place else. Although it is still Europe you need a VISA to enter the country and, unlike many other parts of Europe where the only real difference is the language barrier, Russia really does have some distinct cultural differences.

For Evgeny leaving Russia and setting out on his career in another country as a professional racer, it was a tough call, "When I arrived in Europe the first problem was the language. I couldn't communicate with anyone, but I had to learn quickly because the team (CAS Honda) could only speak in English. There was a group of us living together from around the world, and so we had a little family that supported each other. It's things like going to the shop to order something that was hard, and if anyone asked anything I would get red-faced and not understand" he adds.

Most people arrive in Moscow when they visit Russia and as soon as you leave the airport it's nose-to-tail traffic. Only not like nose-to-tail in

London, Paris or Milan but in Russia there are no apparent rules for drivers! Think M25 on the worst day and multiply it by about five. The smell of fumes choke and there's no let-up.

The further you get away from the city, the less dual carriageways and the roads deteriorate and that's not to mention the frustrating, bizarre and random traffic jams in the middle of nowhere. Stuck in a queue, with people driving up the hard shoulder, overtaking on the outside and pushing in despite the traffic coming in the other direction might seem mental to most but is perfectly normal in Russia. It explains why Bobby is a bit of an erratic driver! "The way of life is different in Europe," Bobby explains, "you have to learn how to live with all of the rules and everything is a little bit more tight, fast pace and the government is always watching you with cameras on every post. Everything is strict, for example on the roads everyone follows the line, and the third one [the verge!] where you're not supposed to go, nobody goes. But in Russia everybody uses this, so that's the kind of free things I mean. In Russia we are a large country, so we have a street with lots of fields, but in Europe there are houses after houses after houses and it's a lot more tight. I don't like this so much."

Bobby's home town of Kondrovo is a quiet place, a world away from what we know in Europe. Most people drive a Lada, which I assume is because they are the sturdiest vehicles and the only thing that doesn't fall to

bits bouncing around over the mammoth potholes (have you ever owned a Lada Jen?! - JP). We think we have it bad in the UK? In the Russian countryside the roads just turn from Tarmac to dust, and nearly every road has massive craters in it. The Russians don't seem to mind – the locals know where they are and drive around, avoiding the worst of the holes.

Bobby's father, also called Evgeny Bobryshev, met us as we arrived and although he speaks hardly any English, he took us to see the local track he owns and where Bobby grew up riding. Bobby's father is such a nice guy, like his son in many ways. After getting to the track it becomes clear why the boy loves big jumps, sweeping turns and the old-school terrain. This track is quite a spectacle, and it annually attracts more than the average GP each year (36,000) for the Russian championship.

But the life of a budding MX racer is limited in this vast country as Bobby junior explains: "The racing in Russia is different because there isn't so much competition. We have a different style of living with motocross and travelling, and the track prep is different. The organisation depends on the city – my father does the organisation perfectly, but other cities just put a gate down and sometimes they don't even water, so the dust is bad. There aren't so many tracks, and there is a big distance between them, because Russia is such a big place. We also only have five rounds in the Russian championship and it's really different."



Bobby grew up in a sweet little house on the outskirts of Kondrovo and clearly loves coming home for mama's cooking and her homegrown food. The moderately sized garden is home to a cherry tree, and a large veg patch with potatoes, carrots, beans and plenty more to eat. There's also a lot of nice flowers, and this is obviously a homely mother who has given Bobby a good grounding.

It was here where the Honda motocross star began his love for bikes: his father was Russian champion but it was never the plan for Evgeny to follow in his footsteps. Out front of the house a small concrete area is where a young Bobby began riding. Quickly out-growing the space, he graduated to 85cc on a small area behind the garden, which is now a growing ground for potatoes. Evgeny senior built the small track on this patch of land, where junior learned to get over small jumps and ride turns, but apparently there were a lot of crashes on the sandy ground!

Bobby's old hangout with his school friends just down the way from his house is nothing more than some hot water pipes, running above the ground by the school. They spent time there because, in the minus 30 degree temperatures in the depths of winter, it was the only place to stay warm and hang out. To be honest it is a fairly usual teenage hangout, but it's the other surroundings that seem so different from Europe. It's far from a prosperous part of the world but the people are happy, happy with their simple lifestyle. There are no huge supermarkets and no major retailers, just small shops selling fruit and streets twisting around the high rise flats in the more urban areas. "When I go home I have a lot of school friends, so it's nice." Says Bobryshev. "Unfortunately I don't have much time when I am there, as it's usually only for a week, so I prefer to spend the time with my family. But anyway

with my good friends we go out like before I left, and this is one of the things that helps to refresh me. When I go back it's like nothing has changed and it's just the same feeling as before I came to Europe."

Originally a paper factory funded the rise of motocross in Kondrovo and the comradely between this young racer and the town dignitaries is obvious – there's a lot of respect as we also meet the mayor and he is clearly proud of his town and the relationship with Bobby. The mayor is a young guy, who is very proud of the motocross in the area as well as how it's MX star has put the place on the map.

The 'Bobryshev heritage tour' takes in his local sports stadium – a basic tarmac running track with a field where there's a load of kids playing football and an old grandstand – and eventually his home track, where he practised ahead of the MXGP with Tanel Leok and Davide Guarneri. It was the first time he has taken the factory bike there, and boy was he excited! He couldn't wait to get his gear on and get ripping. For Bobby junior it's a great feeling to be there with other riders as, in recent history, it was only him ripping round the track week in, week out.

The track 'clubhouse', which is home to the club Bobby senior runs, is a small workshop down the bumpiest road you've ever been on in an industrial area on the edge of town. Bobby rocked up on a quad and showed us in to his father's selection of bikes that he and his friends take to the track to ride more regularly. In younger years he basically got up, rode a bit, played computer games, and rode a bit more.

"I've been in Europe a very long time and the only time I can go home is for a week in May for the race at my father's track, as well as for a little time in the winter. It gives me a lot of energy to be there, because I feel good there, and I >>

The sticker on the back of the Lada reads: 'My other car is Ford Mustang GT'



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*What we can't work out
is why Roger Magee is
hangin' with Bobby?*



*Since Bobby left home his
mum's garden is no longer
a practice track*



have a positive energy from being around people I grew up with. It's good to be away from the mentality and stress of being in Europe, which is where my work is. I am relaxing my body and mind when I am home because of the surroundings, so when I go back to Europe I feel refreshed."

In the clubhouse we spend some time with Bobby's father, friends and mother who join in talking about Bobby's life, hopes and dreams. His mum cooks some fantastic food: chicken, rice, potatoes and tried us on some of the famous Russian vodka, which isn't too bad, but the homemade Grappa is bloody awful! For some reason the Italians in the Honda team seem to love it!

It's in this little clubhouse where there are trophies, pictures, jerseys and pieces of the Bobryshev history. There's a huge telly where they're blasting out local racing videos, and huge posters of Bobby in his former MX2 days. It's quite awesome to see and you can feel the party spirit of the locals, which included a sniper. Yes it's a bit different, although quite unnerving and you'll never see anyone knock back vodka like the Russians. On the first night there was a small party in our hotel that must have gone through 20 bottles of the stuff! Most people would be buckled after just a few of those!

"The clubhouse is great. My father is one of

the guys that loves motocross, especially in our town," Bobby says. "Before he could not keep the track in such a good condition because there was only me riding there regularly with my cousin. The motocross wasn't so popular locally. Now we have 15 people riding there every weekend at least, and he's involved with that, so his life is full of motocross. It's nice for me to see that, because he lives for this. The bikes are based at the clubhouse, so when I am there we have a little gathering in the evening after the training, and we have a little party while getting everyone together. There's some drinking and the atmosphere is great."

In the clubhouse there's a book of pictures with past photos of Bobby senior and details of the year junior raced the Russian 125cc road race championship because his major sponsor wanted him to go there – he won it by the way.

In his own words Bobby's father describes his son's rise to fame as 'unexpected' and that the flying Russian basically just started winning races, championships and was noticed by investors which took him to outside of Russia. The biggest turning point was of course when the 6'2" star switched to Honda, and the factory team. He's a late starter but his father believes there's 'more to come' and now he has the right bike, the right team and everything in place, it's just Bobby who needs to believe in it to make it happen.

A more relaxed kinda guy these days Evgeny's life as a professional MX racer is clearly that of a modern, professional sportsman, traveling and living wherever 'work' takes him: "When I first came to Europe it was really difficult to be away from home, but now I have Elena (his wife) with me it's more easy. I have someone who is always with me, and we are together. I don't get homesick so much, but when the season is finished I am for sure going back for a few weeks."

"Holland is my home now, as I have a rented apartment there and Harrie van Hout my manager helps me with everything, so I have another little family there. The team for practicing is close, so this is where I will stay while doing my job for now."

"I don't know where I'll end up when I finish racing," Bobryshev concludes about the future. "I can't plan that far ahead, as I'm concentrating on what I am doing now. I am not sure where I can start doing some other business, or if it's going to be in Russia or in Europe. Russia is my home so I understand the rules, but I don't know how my life will turn out."

Our final stop before leaving Kondrovo is back to the town and Bobby's mum's shop. Scan the fridges looking for something familiar and you'll find Monster Energy rip-off drinks, something which looks like orange juice, along with a selection of meats and frozen chicken feet.

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Q: Do German national newspapers give much coverage on your racing?

Alan Crouch, Redruth

A: "No nothing, in my home country (Germany) in Weilheim, where my family are living the local newspaper sometimes something about my races, but nationally no nothing."

Q: You've taken lots of moto wins during your time in MX1 so far, which one would you like to re-live?

Clive Barlow, Eastbourne

A: "I think Faenza '08 and France '09 because I was just controlling the whole races, I was leading by so much. In France I had the feeling even before the race that I was going to win, it's not very often that before you even get to the gate you know you're going to win."

Q: Was the back problem you had throughout '11 caused by a crash and what did the subsequent operations involve?

Jason Hemmings, Uplyme

A: "No it wasn't a crash, the week before Valkenswaard 2011 I twisted my leg and back, I didn't crash and remained standing on the bike but then the pain started. I continued the rest of the season taking pain killing injections and at the end of the year I had to have three operations done. They took out the disc at the bottom of my back and replaced it with bone."

Q: Considering how good your results have been since you came back this year I can't believe KTM have given your ride to Ken de Dycker, what do you have to say on the matter?

Richie Middleton, Leeds

A: "Hah! At first I was surprised by the decision made by KTM...um, how I don't know what to say! It was a decision made by the team and KTM and I respect that, maybe not many guys would respect that decision but it's fine for me, I cannot say anymore. Well actually Pit [Beirer] has already said it in some news that the real reason that they won't have me is that they want a second rider, so Tony first and then a second rider to stay behind, and with me I was still fighting for the win."



MAXNAGL

GERMAN COMEBACK (FROM INJURY) KID DISHES SOME KTM DIRT AHEAD OF HIS SWITCH TO HONDA RACING...

Words by JP O'Connell Photos by ktmimages.com/Ray Archer

Q: I watched you dominate at the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Mill in the summer, are you now 100% fit and how much of a confidence boost was that result?

Alex Moore, Belfast

A: "It was a great weekend, I mean there was not all of the GP riders but still Marc de Reuver he is a good sand rider. For your self-confidence it helps a lot and the riding there was just really good, many people came up to tell me how well I was riding, I had the feeling that I was almost flying over the track there. It was just one of those good days that you have and it was really good."

Q: You're known as "Mr Holeshot" how about giving me a couple of tips on how to get out of the gate a bit quicker!

Tim Carter, Colchester

A: "This name actually came about in 2010 when I was still on the 450 and I almost always got the holeshot. Last year on the 350 I was always struggling on the start so I told them to give away the name as I didn't want to be called Mr Holeshot anymore! Now that I'm back on the 450 again it looks like it's coming back and I think it's a combination of how you prepare your gate, bike set-up and technique, like the point of shifting and hooking the next gear and the position on the bike. A lot of it is also in your head, if you believe that you can win the start then usually it will work!"

Q: How difficult was it to have to sit at home knowing that you should be out there racing?

Will Evershot, Lincoln

A: "In the beginning it was difficult, at the start of the season I went to the GP at Valkenswaard, watched all of the guys race and ended up getting really sad. On the Sunday after watching the first heat I was so upset that I went home and went training because I was over it! For the five months that I was at home I didn't watch

any races, I was completely off the sport for that time because for me that allowed me to concentrate on my training and homework until finally I could race again."

Q: With you, Roczen and Schiffer do you think we may see a German MX of Nations winning team in the near future?

Jake Baker, Plymouth

A: "It's possible but difficult. I think Lommel is going to be a good chance to be on the podium again because Kenny, Marcus and me are all good in the sand but I say that for the Nations as well as good riders you also need a lot of luck. If one rider makes a mistake then the whole team gets the points and then it is done, for that event you need all three riders to be fit, for all riders to have the luck and then it's possible to be on the podium."

Q: Did KTM let you go purely because of the fact you were unable to race this season or is there more to it than that?

Daniel Radley, Preston

A: "They say that it's not because I was injured, it's like as I said before that they want to have a second rider."

Q: With Cairoli doing so well on the 350 were you ever tempted to stick or was it a KTM decision that you rode the 450?

Darren King, Orpington

A: "No, KTM always ask me which bike I want to ride, they said you can take what you want, 350 or 450. Last year I decided to take the chance with the 350 as I knew it was a good bike and the way it fits, but in the end I was missing the extra power and when KTM brought out the new 450 I chose that."

Q: Who has been your biggest rival throughout your career?

Jamie Short, Oxford

A: "Hmm, there have been a lot but mostly it's been people like de Dycker and Desalle."

Q: Has the back injury meant that you're now a little less likely to hang it out as much as before the injury?

Mike Trenchard, Wells

A: "No, no, not at all it's actually the opposite way. Mentally I was getting stronger with all the shite I was having with my back because after spending so long in the hospital and then eight weeks at home laying in bed unable to move...well it makes you mentally strong going through that. Other things happen as well like if it's raining or the practice bike breaks and where you'd normally get frustrated well now I'm just like "well okay I'll just go training the next day" because you've got used to being in a much worse place and it all gets put into perspective."

Q: Were there ever any team orders in the KTM truck?

Jon Preston, Bridlington

A: "Yes there were, I think it was in '08 when Barragan was in the team. It was in Loket and I was leading the first heat with Barragan in second when the pit board went out on the last lap to let him past. I didn't see the board because on the last lap I'm just trying to bring it home. When I got to the podium nobody was there from KTM, no congratulations and I was like, "okay what's wrong". When I got to the truck nobody was speaking to me, no cheering, nothing. It was so sad and I had no idea what had happened. When they were asking me why I hadn't let him pass I just said that I didn't know that I'd had to, so when we went out for the second moto I just had to sit behind him in second, I was not allowed to pass. Don't get me wrong if it was the last race of the season and it was for the championship then of course I would have helped him out, I think anybody would, but I think there were still about five races left in the season and he was only in 5th in the championship, I really didn't understand the decision!"

CROSS BOYS

LIKE THE MOST EXCLUSIVE OF LIMITED EDITIONS, KTM'S XC RANGE IS ALWAYS AN EAGERLY AWAITED IMPORT TO THE UK. CONFIRMED XC FAN GEOFF WAKKER TAKES THE 2013 MODELS FOR A RIP ROUND ENDUROLAND...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Sutty

The ever increasing number of cross country and sprint races in the UK is causing a big demand for specific bikes for that 'bit of both' world of off-road. A cross country bike doesn't need lights or any of the other gubbins found on a full enduro bike as they're built for closed course use. They're also on a weight level with your average motocross bike and feature slightly stiffer suspension than a full on enduro bike but stop short of the stiffness of an MX bike.

Our quest for value then should maybe make us re-think our strategy sometimes but all-in-all do the 'traditional' specifics about MX and enduro machines not mean a bike somewhere between the two is a simply better buy for most customers as we search for VFM? Could the XC bikes available from a few of the manufacturers, not just KTM, be the key to our off-road happiness? As the multi-use for XC models in both full-on cross country, extreme and sprint racing can simply be added to a weekend's MX racing, aren't these bikes the answer to most of our biking needs all in one package?

KTM knows well that there's a strong enough market for the XC model bike because of these reasons. But it seems we're one of the few countries where the models are officially imported. So we're special – but we knew that already. We're so special in fact we got a special UK-based test of the 2013 range all to ourselves and it made us feel special indeed. We headed to the mighty Enduroland, near Banbury, to check out the latest XC range from the men in orange. Roll up and take a bow, the 150, 250 and 300XC's and the 250 and 350XC-F's...

150XC

The little screamer in the KTM XC family is a beauty. The solid build and evident lightness you can see from the size of the little motor and slick lines on this bike automatically switched me into rev mode. The 150 likes to be revved but it is not a classic 'drop off the power' machine that needs to be singing flat out or not singing at all. The motor is very strong from the lowest revs and will pull higher gears than you may imagine to help with traction in slick areas. This is no massive torque producing machine but every ounce of >>





horsepower is being delivered with purpose to allow you to cover the ground quickly and easily.

The handling is great, as you would expect for a bike this light. As ever with the smaller capacity two-stroke machines there is a great balance to its handling and the 150XC is especially good in the tight, single track going whether it is wet and slippery or dry as a bone this bike whips along like a whippy along thang...

250XC

The days when 250 two-strokes of any kind where difficult to ride are well and truly over. The forward thinking of KTM and their two-stroke program, which they have kept strong when the Japanese have long given up, has ensured the Austrians are smacking out oil burners of the highest order. The 250XC is the proof of this particularly sweet dessert and a bike which is very controllable and effortless to ride fast. This motor is smooth from the bottom and develops with a linear style to allow you to choose how you would like to ride.

I tried to put it through its paces on the Enduroland terrain to find its limits. I didn't get close. This bike is ready for every discipline in the off-road realm. Take this bike to any event which doesn't require roadwork and you'd have to enjoy. The handling characteristics in the hard choppy bumps of the test venue were a great test for the softer than MX suspension. This great setting coupled with the advantages of the now standard rear linkage for the XC models allows a new level of handling performance across the range and nowhere is it more evident than on the 250XC.

>>





KTM 150XC

Capacity: 143.6cc
Bore and stroke: 56.0 x 58.4mm
Transmission: six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 9.5litres
Front suspension: 48mm WP USD fork (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP monoshock (317mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Seat height: 992mm
Wheelbase: 1480mm
Ground clearance: 395mm
Dry weight: 104kg
Price: £4745

KTM 250XC

Capacity: 249.0cc
Bore and stroke: 66.4 x 72.0mm
Transmission: six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 9.5litres
Front suspension: 48mm WP USD fork(300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP monoshock (317mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Seat height: 992mm
Wheelbase: 1495mm
Ground clearance: 395mm
Dry weight: 104kg
Price: £6145

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KTM 300XC

Capacity: 293.0cc
Bore and stroke: 72.0 x 72.0mm
Transmission: six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 9.5litres
Front suspension: 48mm WP USD fork (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP monoshock (317mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Seat height: 992mm
Wheelbase: 1495mm
Ground clearance: 385mm
Dry weight: 104kg
Price: £6345

KTM 250XC-F

Capacity: 249.9cc
Bore and stroke: 78.0 x 52.3mm
Transmission: six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 9.5litres
Front suspension: 48mm WP USD fork (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP monoshock (317mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Seat height: 992mm
Wheelbase: 1495mm
Ground clearance: 375mm
Dry weight: 106kg
Price: £6695

Stronger triple clamps and new, twin chamber forks help stability

2013 chassis tweaks are few but effective when you're log-hopping

300XC

An all time favourite from a personal point of view and with the linkage suspension system in operation for rear-end control and traction this bike stays at the top of my 'to own' list. The 300 simply does everything a great bike should do. It doesn't do anything in an over-flashy way but every control, rpm and stroke of the suspension, coupled with a forgiving chassis design in chrome-moly, means we are heading towards dirt biking Utopia!

Some of the changes to the new supermodel 450SX-F have reached the XC models with the larger diameter rear wheel spindle taking better care of turning precision across the range. The precision with which the 300 can be handled means it never gets too much for you, which is to be admired. This coupled with the awesome, super-torquey and strong, smooth power makes for a formidable bike and therefore a happy rider.

250EXC-F

With the excitement of the two-strokes dealt with it is onto the valved and cammed machines. The 250XC-F is one of the easiest bikes to ride on earth. The power is smooth and very usable as it simply does nothing wrong, unexpected or surprising. You really cannot get into trouble on this bike and with the twin chamber forks on a great internal setting and the rear shock working through a linear stroke ratio, the handling is well taken care of.

The 250 is really only an exhaust system away from delivering great power for any MX race, as well as the cross-country style events. The fact that all these bikes come with a slightly bigger tank does not detract from anything on the performance side of taking these bikes to your local race track and hammering out the moto's with your friends on one weekend then hitting a three hour race the next weekend without changing a thing. And besides, the 250XC-F has the 'race-ready' stamp on the side so it must be raced I guess...>>





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350XC-F

The big boy of the group has the looks, handling power and great stability like the rest of the line-up. The trick up its sleeve is it cuts an edge and is an exciting bike to own because it's so close to the Cairoli bike. The changes made from the full-on MX bike actually make this the perfect bike for most of us who aren't about to set the world championships on fire. The weight is close to the MX bike, while the ride is slightly softer than the MX machine and that makes it perfect for most local style tracks.

The big tank makes life easy for the three hour style racing the bike is developed for. The billet triple clamps on the 350, as they are across the range again, make it turn and handle with great precision. The power of the chassis design really comes to light for me on the 350 XC-F as it irons out some of the issues I have with the MX and enduro bikes. It makes for an absolute demon handling machine with the power delivered through the revised power curve and gearbox set-up. All in all the 350 was a great bike on this test as every subtle change made from each end of the spectrum to make this 'middle of the road' model was easily definable and therefore a joy to test through great feeling for the bike.

KTM 350XC-F

Capacity: 349.7cc
Bore and stroke: 88.0 x 57.5mm
Transmission: six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 9.5litres
Front suspension: 48mm WP
USD fork (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP
monoshock (317mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Seat height: 992mm
Wheelbase: 1495mm
Ground clearance: 376mm
Dry weight: 107.8kg
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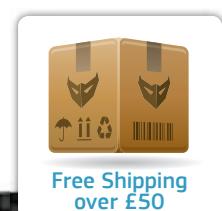
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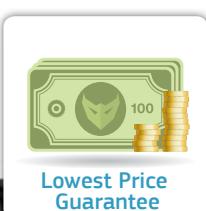
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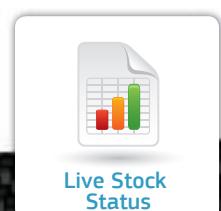
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KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID! SUZUKI'S 2013 RM-Z450 FLIRTS WITH DBR'S MAIN MX MAN ED BRADLEY AT THE OFFICIAL UK LAUNCH...

Words by Ed Bradley Photos by Redeye

Hooray, our first UK bike test this year...just a short two and a half hour trip to the twisty, hillside track at Apex and for a rip around on Suzuki's latest MX1 machine!

The great thing about doing tests in the UK is that you get to do plenty of riding and on this day we did plenty of berm smashing and bum whipping...perhaps a little too much bum whipping as it was a windy day and didn't fancy doing the big, sweet jump in the middle of the track! The rest were dialled in though and the hours were clocked up.

I like the Suzuki 450, in fact, I like the yellow perils generally. They have a very safe feel to them, nurturing reassurance without giving false confidence and the 2013 model builds on that.

Suzuki are playing safe and the updates reflect that. Their motto seems to be 'Improve Durability, Enhance Maintenance' which is great for riders who want reliability week-in, week-out from their racing machines. And this year the bike has been scoring great results here in the UK, in Europe and in the U.S.A.

The one thing that does puzzle me though is how did the colour scheme get passed off? Someone, somewhere, at some point, sat back in their chair and said 'Yep, that's it, she looks rad now'. But I think it's like my kids have been playing with the Fuzzy Felts and I just don't get it! I suppose it doesn't make too much difference because when you get your sticker kits fitted it all blends in anyway...

As we go through the presentation to discover the 2013 updates there is plenty more Fuzzy Felt diagrams on the PowerPoint slides so at least these guys are consistent!

The engine has quite a few different coloured-in parts so let me tell you about these items first....

The Suzuki engineers are happy with the top-end power and performance from this motor and

have concentrated on improving the low-to-mid-range drive, which seems to be a common trait from all the manufacturers at the moment as they battle to produce a quieter bike without compromising the power output. The intake cam timing and lift have been altered slightly to give smoother and better power control and the exhaust cam remains the same. Below the cam and the valves is the next improvement.

Suzuki are proud of their heritage in motocross as well as from road racing and are happy to use the knowledge gained from the tarmac to create a piston that is 13% lighter with better combustion efficiency. This came from MotoGP technology and their GSX-R1000 machine! The piston pin is made short and durable and the connecting rod is re-shaped and lighter too. The effect of these modifications is a faster throttle response and an increase in bottom-to-mid-range power, plus an increase in piston rigidity and better reliability.

To make sure the throttle response is faster the magneto generates more power and the ECM now has a higher-performance processor, the combination of which doubles the energy ignition making it more of a four banger. Weirdly, Suzuki boasts that the ECM is now waterproof to resist damage from water and mud – what was it before then?

Success often comes from KISS (keeping it simple stupid!) and that's what Suzuki have done with the ECM self-diagnosis function for fault detection, maintenance schedule and includes an hour meter which I think, is pretty cool. On top of this, adjustments can be made without special tools. Also, you don't get much more simple than having a rich coupler that gives a stronger, smoother pull from the bottom and a leaner coupler that gives a sharper, more aggressive response compared to the standard coupler if you want a change in the mapping...simples!

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RM-Z450

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Ground clearance: 325mm
Dry weight: 113kg (wet)
Price: £6549

bike test

Team DBR's MX tester Ed Bradley's no great fan of the looks but loves the RM-Z's chassis



13% lighter piston developed in MotoGP and Suzuki's road sportsbikes



Plug in to the ECU self-diagnostics and new hour meter

Changing gear will be even easier now as each gear and the selecting cam have been re-shaped for more precise shifting. The gear ratios remain the same as well as the external gearing. Interestingly, the airbox material has been stiffened up to help reduce noise for when this baby is sucking air for all that low-end to mid-range grunt.

That low-end to mid-range grunt is also coming from the 50mm longer exhaust pipe and the sound is reduced by internal modifications to the core of the silencer.

When exhaust packing burns out there is a significant power loss and packing needs replacing far more often than most riders do in reality, so, to make it easier to refill the fire extinguisher, bolts have replaced the old rivets to make taking the end cap off hassle-free. To keep the motor Über cool Suzuki have redesigned the radiator fins for improved airflow and added extra volume for an increase in coolant capacity too.

The chassis has received minor refinements such as modified sub-frame mounts and seat rail and a slight reduction in weight. To keep the super-safe and stable RM-Z alive the steering

angle has been altered one degree from 29°40" to 28°40" to give it a little more nimble feel and sharper turning.

Following on from this, the rear suspension is pretty much the same as last year but has a softer spring and the bottom shock and linkage bolt sit in holders, so there is no need to use two spanners to tighten just one nut making maintenance easier.

At the front end, there have been changes however. The 450 comes fitted with the second generation 'Separate Function Fork'. These are lighter and have less friction than conventional upside down units, have pre-load adjustment and the fork inner tubes have been increased in diameter one millimetre to 48mm providing more rigidity and better dampening force control.

Looking at the bike the Renthal Fat bars are a bit flat and clumsy but when you sit on the bike you get that comfy feel that you get when sitting on most Suzukis. This bike actually feels a little sharper-edged compared to previous models which mostly comes from a modified, closer fit where the seat meets the rad shrouds at the tank junction. The RM-Z is quite a tall bike too,

which, for me being six foot two, is great.

Out from under the Tyco Suzuki team truck awning it was time to take to the track. The track was dry with a few lines already in so it didn't take long to get some sweet berms and few braking bumps put in with the help of Stuart Edmonds, Stephen Sword and Martin Barr who where there to add to the occasion and get some extra practice laps under their belt in time for the final few races of the season.

I felt really comfortable on this bike straight away. The distance from the top of the seat to the foot pegs is quite long so my legs aren't over bent making it easy for me to sit and stand up and the handle bars are in easy reach, quite low and close to the bike, which means it's easy to reach the controls with my arms bent when braking and in the turns.

It's a good job I can reach the controls easily because the power on this Suzuki is awesome! It's so strong off the bottom and the transition in to the mid-range is effortless. The throttle is very responsive, even with a quick blast of the throttle the motor picks up instantly.

On the track this is great in a number of >>



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MRS

SEALED WITH A KISS



Switching power modes noticeably affects engine performance



'No over-reaction, just good strong feedback'
Nuff said...

situations. In deep, soft berms where you can just bury the bike deep in, you can use high gears, hold the throttle on full and she just pulls you out cleanly with lots of traction. Then, there was an off-cambered turn with a berm that had no weight to it and would just blow through if you hit it too hard. So riding around on the flat part of the turn and slowly feeding the power on to build up speed for the exit of the turn was, again, really easy and smooth.

What I really love about this motor though is the top-end. It really finishes off the power delivery after you get pulled out of a turn and made the initial gear changes lovely as the bike just pulls and revs to the moon so you can leave the bike in the same gear for what seems like ages!

I took the opportunity to test the rich and lean couplers for the ECM mapping and these subtle changes to the low-end power are quite noticeable in physical effort. The rich couple was stronger pulling, it was possible to relax a little more and pull even higher gears in some turns and that meant it was deceptively fast too. The lean setting was sharper, felt faster and I definitely expended more energy hauling ass with this setting. I could feel my heart rate go through the roof by the end of the session! The standard setting was perfect for our day at Apex and we left it at that.

The bike handled really well and is equally balanced between the front and rear suspension and felt stable all around the track. The rear end was almost a little boring, soaking up bumps and landings, tracking well through the turns and giving good traction on the exits. The only adjustments I would make with more time would be to go a little softer on the compression.

The front end was noticeable in its performance by how good the front brake was. The back brake is as it always has been and works well, only the front brake had the bike standing up on its front wheel going in to some of the tight turns and has a really strong and positive feel on the lever...there have been no updates for the front brake but compared to the bikes I have recently ridden worked brilliantly (that's excluding the 1981 490 Maico at Farleigh Castle, the weekend before the test, because the front brake just doesn't work!!!).

The extra rigidity in the forks was also noticeable – one place in particular, on a downhill section going in to a left-hander. A berm had built-up going in to the turn where I was able to brake against the bank with the front wheel turned in slightly, so that when I let go of the brake, the tyre grips and turns in at the right point. There was no over-reaction, just really good, strong feedback from the ground which meant I could consistently use the tighter line to keep out the trashed berm on the outside of the turn.

Elsewhere on the track, the downward compression stroke felt a little harsh when braking over bumps when there was a lot of weight on the front end. But apart from that it was a doddle to lean the bike over when railing the banked turns and the forks worked great on the jumps, both on the jump faces and the landings.

Overall though I am surprised how much fun I had riding the 2013 RM-Z450 because on the face of it things don't look to have changed. It's quite tall but it's ace to blast around on, the motor and handling are great for that and the bike makes riding carefree. The updates are focused around 'Improve Durability, Enhance Maintenance', which I think makes the bike a winner in more ways than one.



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FULL FACTORY

HE WAS ONLY 24 HOURS FROM GLEN HELEN BUT COULD WAKKER'S ADVENTURES KEEP ON ROLLIN' ACROSS THE POND FOR A FULL-FACTORY KAWASAKI RIDE?

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Eric Narvaez

The buzz from the British MXGP was still rippin' when the now legendary emails started arriving from Team Denison/Dirt Rider out in sunny Southern California. The flavour of the mails from Chris and Scotty Denison were very much pointing to a return to the hallowed ground of the Glen Helen Mecca of off-road in San Bernadino... Last year's 'Ironman' class second place nearly destroyed me so I was more than happy to wear that t-shirt and hear about the opportunity to join the race this year on a team. How cool would it be to return to the race and NOT have to ride for the duration alone? Very cool was the answer floating around my sometimes empty cranial sphere.

As info grew from Chris D it seemed there were to be two teams fully supported by Kawasaki USA. This would be massive. I imagined a full-on factory Kawi sitting shining and ready for us to tear-up. Then I would awake from that dream and have a word with myself. Factory bikes are out of even our journo reach when it comes to racing. There is no way that could happen...could it?

I gave Chris my word I would be there and booked the flights to Los Angeles, which is a painful process as my bank only seems to hold limited amounts of moolah at any one time! Thomas Patrick Motoxtreme Evo Brown whipped my ass up to Heathrow the next morning and I arrived in tired but good shape at SR75 World Team's USA HQ late on the Thursday evening. It was great to see Scotty D and Jen G in fine spirits and loving life. Scotty's love for all things dirt bike is off the scale so things are pretty easy around them. The strange thing about this race was the fact we didn't really have to prepare any bikes. Pretty much everything was taken care off. This was already turning into a full factory adventure and we hadn't left for the track.

Now, if any of you have travelled to different time zones around the world you will know that jet lag is a strange thing. I usually take three to four days to fully get into California time, as night is day and vice versa. The eight hour time difference plays havoc with any form of normal sleep. In my mind I turned this into a positive as I thought when my team-mates and indeed our competitors were getting tired and depraved of sleep I would just be coming into good form.

Hydrating was the key to surviving the race

and sacking the jet-lag. I constantly drank water and electrolytes to keep my levels high. The temperature has been reaching 100 plus degrees everyday this summer so things were going to be incredibly hot (a slight difference to the UK summer!).

RACE DAY

The dreaded 2am wake-up happened on the race day so I did the only thing I could and hydrated like a mofo!!! Even at this stage, and in true Wakker style, I didn't really know what the plan was except there would be two teams and I was in the 'A team'. Five AM eventually came and we were up and on Interstate 15 heading north towards Glen Helen. To say we were excited humans would be an understatement... I guess the only person in the area more pumped was DBR's Stateside photo journo Mr Eric 'E Narv' Narvaez. Our snapper was off the scale excited (as everyone found out over the next 24 hours with his inability to stop chatting!).

What greeted us when we pulled into the pit lane area of the track was unreal. Check this: We had two full-on Monster Energy trailers and a catering truck all forming our pit, the awnings were out, the flooring was down and two shiny bikes sat on their Matrix stands. Greg and the awesome crew of Jason Smigel, Jeff Decker and Ryan Collins from Kawasaki had laid on support beyond my wildest dreams and I nearly ripped the door handle off Scotty's new Toyota Truck of Power to get a look at what would be our A Team race bike. I simply couldn't believe my eyes. The KX450F they had prepared for us was absolutely full-on FACTORY!!! Sorry to sound a tad 'Team USA' but f**k it, I was stoked!

Greg and the Kawi crew had stepped up so the pressure was on big time! Chris D rolled in and we got the introductions sorted. I was in the A Team with Chris D and his DR test riders, Ricky Yorks, Kris 'Ibz' Keefer, Chris Barrett and Adam Booth. The Dirt Rider Kawasaki team was ready to roll. Well apart from Booth who wouldn't turn up until the evening...

I was pretty nervous as Kapatain CD had given me the honour of taking the start. With the team consisting of AMA Pro MX and SX riders I was crappin' it and excited all at the same time. Scotty D was taking the start for the B, 'fun' team so that was cool. Sign up with Lori and her lovely crew, warm up and getting >>



Only having "one and a half arms" ain't stopping Wakker hitting the Glen Helen 24hrs!



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MRS



24HR TEAM-MATES

ADAM BOOTH, 37-YEARS-OLD SENIOR EDITOR OF DIRT RIDER MAGAZINE

I love friendly power with smooth, almost too soft suspension so my first outing on the KX450 was a terrifying experience. It was set-up to race SX and had such an incredible boost right off idle I felt it was trying to kill me, especially in the tight, rock litter trail. I was a little hesitant to say too much bad about the bike fearing I was being a sissy and just needed to ride faster to make it work better, but after huddling the team up I found out I wasn't the only one. A fork change later the suspension was working a lot better and constant feathering of the clutch was the key to smooth power delivery. The race was a lot of fun and our team killed it, thanks to some serious effort from Kawasaki Pro Circuit.

We will no doubt be smashing the trail next year at the 24-hour Glen Helen race but hopefully on a machine that doesn't want to jostle my brain and tear my arms off at the shoulders!

pumped up all led to the start. The heat was getting out of control and I was fekkin melting!!!

Generally though everyone stays pretty calm in the lead up to the start as some team member's first ride is still four or five hours away. My plan for the first stint was to take a couple of laps then get the next guy on the bike to get a feel for the track. I kitted up and headed to the start. The bars were set pretty neutral and the levers too. Everything felt ok but I haven't really ridden a KX450F in anger this year so it was going to be a steep learning curve. We had the trickiest looking bike and pit so it was all down to us to get the thing through the race and to the finish – which was a long way all of a sudden.

My first impression of the bike from riding it to the start was how rippin' the power felt. Holy moly this beauty was a fire breather! The chassis felt very firm but I didn't want to mess around with it, as it had to suit our spectrum of riders. With my experience from last year I knew the hard bumps on the plateau's are unforgiving and the soft, supple suspension setting would stop any extra fatigue on the tougher sections. The track ran differently in layout but we would be covering most of last year's track just in some different directions. If the factory Fox Shox equipment was too stiff I would be in trouble.

The start is lined up in groups. We hit the fourth row and as each line went we got closer to our 'clutch hand on helmet, engine running' start procedure. Then just like that we were off. The bullshit could stop as the Kawi, with me hangin' on like a flag, took off down the start straight. I was in there about third or fourth only to be taken by some wang who decided to straight line every corner through the first series of turns. This was maybe a sign of things to come as there needs to be trust at events like this that everyone will stay inside the rules.

We were off though and it was a cracking pace for the first lap through every wash, gulley,

single track, Tarmac, silt bed, plateau and MX section of the nine mile lap. The dust was going to be wild and there was nothing that could be done about it. If you got stuck behind slower riders as I did on lap one you simply have to get the head down and suffer the lower speed and visibility. Lap one was painful and I had absolutely no feeling for the bike. The beautiful thing was begging to be ridden hard but the setting on the fork and shock was way too hard for me. And I am not a small human. The setting would have been perfect for a day at the MX or SX track but I had to complete my session and when I arrived at the pit Ricky was ready to roll. I explained my small issues with the bike but I didn't want to be a moaner about it. The simple fact was the bike ran perfect, felt brilliant on the MX sections but was trying to nail my hands and one and a half arms for that first hour.

The Kawi guys were absolutely cool and there were plans put into motion to begin to soften the bike during the next pit stop. Ricky was rippin' and up next was the awesome and somewhat crazy Kris Keefer. Keefer has been in a winning team and is insanely fast across the ground. Add to this the fact he was rolling out there to do battle in old Skool LBZ Baggy Race Pants and an open face helmet and I knew it was ON! We had a great atmosphere in the pit and the fun team led by Scotty D and Kawi Greg were kicking ass. Everyone was pulling together and with the bike being softened slightly each pit stop I was hoping for a different feeling on my second run out.

Chris 'quiet man' Barrett was up next and he was rippin' out the laps. The energy levels were high but I knew the bike was still running stiff as we were getting some numb and cut-up hand action with each rider by lap two. I blistered in my first lap due to the pounding the gnarly track was handing out through the bike. As Chris D took to the track Booth hadn't turned up so >>



Krazy Kris Keefer keeps it old skool aboard the Pro Circuit KX450F



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24HR TEAM-MATES

CHRIS DENNISON TEAM BOSS,
XX-YEARS-OLD DIRT RIDER EDITOR-IN-
CHIEF, FORMER FMX AND SX RACER.

When the team needed a sixth rider for the Glen Helen 24-Hour, I knew Walker would be perfect so long as we could get his ass over here. I had a ton on my plate while organizing three bikes, 12 team riders and one Ironman but luckily our pals at Kawasaki took amazing care of us, even going so far as a full-on chef – now that is service!

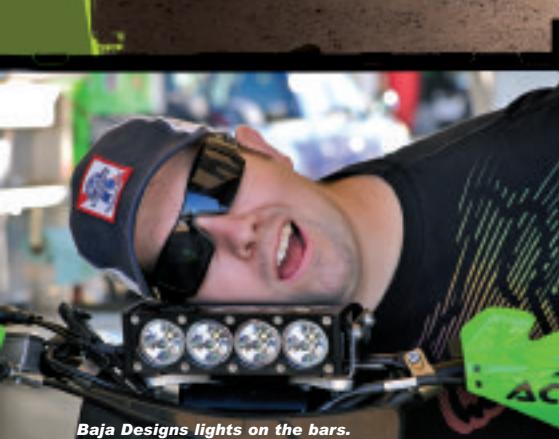
Geoff did an awesome job of getting the bike around and settling us in. I have to admit, I laughed pretty hard when he came back in squawking about the suspension being stiffer than a supercross bike, but then I rode the machine and holy smokes, that thing was set up for Shrek!

A 24-hour team needs guys who are solid riders and cool dudes. Who wants to be around some cranky bastard at 2am? Walker came through for us with a huge grin and a morbid laugh that echoed through the pits. Just when people started to get tired, Geoff would come through with a snappy remark that had us all in stitches.



glen helen 24hrs

Choking dust and 120 degree heat...for 24hrs!



Baja Designs lights on the bars.
Lights out behind the shades...



Pre-race 'good lucks' at the start line

I was fully taping my hands up for my second session right after CD. This was cool as I was struggling to stay calm and not use too much energy while off the bike. When you love riding it's tough to sit and wait your turn.

Everyone was pinning it and I swung the leg over the bike after CD. Nobody seemed to be giving the same feedback about the bike so I thought 'f**k it' I will just get on with it. I hit out the next two laps fairly steady. It was all there just waiting for the rigidity to be eased off. Jason in the pit had a softer setting in another compression side fork so I asked for that to be fitted ASAP and for the shock to be softened. Booth had turned up and took his first lap as the sun dipped to the mountains. Booth is a good test rider and I see him at some of the new model launches around the world. We discussed the bike and how awesome it was in every way except for the chassis stiffness. Booths exact words echoed mine from earlier... "you could take that f**ker to Anaheim!".

There was a longer pit stop coming to make sure the awesome Baja Designs light was ready to roll, as well as new tyres and a fresh filter, so we took the chance to dial in new compression settings in the fork leg and a softer power curve was logged. I was absolutely pumped! I was sure we could all get the best from ourselves and the bike if it worked out how I thought. The light was fading and we had the lead in our class by 28 minutes! Everyone was putting in 100% and it was brilliant to be involved.

Over in the fun class pit the guys were giving it their all too. Dane Herron who is the man behind the crazy X Fighters jump tracks was hitting out the laps in style. Dane is a gnarly bloke and he sports a tremendous 'man beard of power' so all is well in his world! Kawi Greg was riding smooth and Scotty D was doing his thing by making sure the solid laps kept coming from Papa Barrett and the crew. There were a few crash moments for the fun team but Jason, Jeff and Ryan simply dealt with everything to make any problem disappear in a flash of green and black.

On our side of the pit things were running smooth and the bike was running perfectly. Everyone was getting off the bike with a big smile. There is nothing like riding through the darkness and fresher air on a dirt bike when you have been struggling through choking dust and 120 degree heat all day. I took to the track for one of my night sessions with a smile on my face before I'd hit the end of the pit lane! The bike was transformed. Still a full-on, race-bred factory machine but I could tell we were going

to get along just fine from that point on.

I absolutely loved the next hour (ish) on the bike. It was fantastic to lay down some quality laps and try to get the best out of myself and the bike. Everything was falling into place and the bike felt amazing. This was the sensation I was after and I do believe some 'man wood' was present at some points during that session! I wanted to keep riding all night it was so good (the bike or the 'man wood' Geoffro?! – JP).

Keefe, Barrett, Yorks and Kapatain Denison where all in the same frame of mind although tiredness was starting to kick in. These guys had pushed hard during the heat and it was telling. Sleep was required and the night is where this race becomes the battle. But due to my overwhelming excitement and the fact the jet lag was now doing me a favour I was feeling stronger by the minute and ready to ride as many sessions and laps as possible. We were smashing out the laps and the Baja Designs headlight as well as the helmet lights made sure we could see every bit of the destroyed track. I found the track easier in the dark as >>

the shadows led to better line selection. There is no feeling like it. Pinning a Californian silt bed, single track or plateau at 2am rocks! That's as simple as that.

Somehow amid all the fun we'd gone from a big lead to being a lap behind in the click of a finger so we got a little stressed on the A Team at this point. There was talk of extra riders and non-controlled bike work in other teams, amongst other things. If we were going to be beaten by anyone who was rule bending then I wasn't going to stress. We could only do what we were doing by riding solid.

The deepest part of the night drew in and everyone was catching a nap wherever and whenever possible. The night and tiredness does funny things to a human but our vibe was perfect in the Kawi pit. With Keefer and CD letting off fireworks and generally dicking around the atmosphere was brilliant to be a part of. Everyone got their 'game face' on when it was time to ride, taking some stolen moments of quiet to mentally prepare for their next hour long session of 100% focus. None of us wanted to be the one to crash out or break the bike so when it was time for focus there was no problem getting in the zone. I relished every second on the bike

and as dawn approached it was looking like I would be last rider out. I had done the start and I wanted Kapatain CD to take the chequers. We had a team discussion and it was sorted. I would ride the earlier session so Chris could bring it home. We were all buzzing when the sun broke through and the amazing morning heat started to develop. I was about to get onto the factory Kawi for my final stint as the sun drew higher in the morning sky. It was just after 8am, we were 22 hours into our epic adventure and I was feeling stronger than I have felt in my life. There are emotional moments of clarity in life and the 24 hour race of Glen Helen has brought me some of the best and worst moments in my two visits.

I rolled out for my last session with almost a tear in my eye. This was me... Geoff Walker from Lisburn, Northern Ireland riding out onto some of California's gnarliest terrain on a factory Monster Energy Kawasaki with the support of great friends and team-mates. I am struggling to describe the feeling but I hope you can understand what this kind of experience means to me personally. I love bikes I love life and I love all who come along for the adventure in my life.

The next hour defined what this race means to me as every inch of the track was covered

with a great big smile on my large Norn Oirish chops. The bike was perfection, the track seemed easy, I felt fast and smooth. What a ride.

The laps of the 24 hours flew by too quickly and when my very good friend CD took over for the final session I patted him on the back, and said "see ya at the finish", I was so pumped I wanted to do backflips up the pit lane. Results didn't matter. We were a team of tremendous humans all out for the same thing. Having fun and racing hard. In the end the Honda JCR team took the win just after the clock hit the magic 24 and we waited for Chris D and Kawi Greg to come into sight of the finish. CD was killin' it all the way to the flag and pulled out a massive heal clicker in true FMX style!

And with that, it was done. All was well in the world, E Narv was still chatting like an Olympian after 24 hours but it was just noise now! We were all floating on the effort and the mix of tiredness and emotion was evident. This was an absolutely brilliant effort from everyone involved and we took a massively strong third place overall! The result is the icing on the cake. The Glen Helen 24 hour is a real race for 'real' people. It was once again an honour. CD... Thanks for the invite.



Team boss Denison barking the orders!

24HR TEAM-MATES

RICKY YORKS,
24-YEAR-OLD PROFESSIONAL
MOTOCROSS/SUPERCROSS
RACER AND TEST RIDER FOR
DIRT RIDER MAGAZINE

I always somehow get talked into signing up for endurance races forgetting how hard they are, then at 3am when I'm half asleep, I get called to ride. I tell myself I will never do another 24 hour race again! But then shortly after the race I start thinking how cool it would be to 'Iron man' the event. I guess it's just something in your blood. I had a blast meeting Geoff and enjoyed hearing him complain about the suspension being too stiff in his accent!



You need the right lights on the night lights...



GEOFFRO'S US RACER-STYLEE 'I'D LIKE TO THANK MY MOMMA' BOX...

SR75 World Team, Chris Denison, Scott Denison, Greg Lasiewski, Kawasaki USA, DirtRider.com, DirtBikerider.com, Robin, Jonnies and Martyn @ Molsongroup.co.uk, E Narv @ Falconer Photo, Team Keefer, Team Yorks, Team Barrett, Adam Booth, Jeff and Ryan @ Kawasaki, Lori @ Glen Helen, Jen Goin @ Team Scotty, Carly R @ Gaerne, Shoei Helmets, Matt @ 100% Goggles, Philip @ Alias Europe, ISO2, XXX, Demolition, TB @ Motoxtreme, Sex Machine, H, T and T

FULL BORE



JONN VANDEN BERK
LEADS AMERICAN
RODNEY SMITH IN
1988 FRENCH 250GP



THE DUTCHMEN

JEFFREY HERLINGS MAY HAVE BURST ON THE GP SCENE IN DOMINANT FASHION BUT A WORLD TITLE'S BEEN 19 YEARS COMING FOR THE NATION OF SAND MASTERS...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

It's a remarkable fact that Jeffrey Herlings is only the fourth Dutchman ever to claim a crown in the entire 55 years of world championship motocross. Remarkable, because the Netherlands has always been a hotbed of the sport; mired countrywide in race tracks and attracting large, enthusiastic crowds to its GPs, it even hosted the very first Motocross des Nations in 1947!

There were a few early Dutch international riders like Hendrik Reitman and Ben Jansema – both winners at the inaugural 'international motocross' at Imola in Italy, 1948 – before Broer Dirkx twice won the Dutch 500GP in 1959 and 1961. Then Gerrit Wolsink appeared on the scene in the seventies. Aboard a Maico the tall, suave, bespectacled Wolsink, born in Hengelo in 1947, had completed his training as a dentist before plunging into a full-time motocross career, so was already 28-years-old when he

claimed his, and Holland's, first foreign grand prix success at Tarare, in France, in 1975. Hired by Suzuki as team-mate to Roger de Coster, Gerrit would conquer a further dozen GPs over the next five years including, most famously, four US GPs at Carlsbad and the 1975 British round at Hawkstone Park. Second in the world behind de Coster in 1976 – by just six points – and Graham Noyce in 1979, he also finished twice third but never won that elusive world title. His contemporary, US domiciled Pierre Karsmakers – Honda's first factory rider – nailed a Canadian 500GP in 1975 and the burly, bullish, supremely talented Gerard Rond came within a whisker of claiming the 1978 125 title on Yamaha's first water-pumper, winning six GPs along the way but falling at the final hurdle in Czechoslovakia.

Wolsink's 13 grand prix successes would be eclipsed during the 1980s by another nearly man, Kees van der Ven – never outside the top five in a decade of 125, 250 and 500 grands prix. Dutchmen were traditionally, of course, strong in sand (Herlings' dad Peter being typical) but Wolsink, van der Ven, Rond and stylish 250 GP specialist Gert-Jan van Doorn had proven outstanding all-rounders (witness those wins on Carlsbad's merciless Southern Californian blue-groove). However it would be two lads from the same hometown of Oss, in southern Holland, who would finally crack open their country's world championship scorecard. Gerrit Wolsink guided one of them to a famous victory; in 1984, at the age of 16 years, five months and seven days, fair, curly-haired Dave Strijbos won the Dutch 125 GP at Stevensbeek on a WP Honda and became the youngest ever grand prix prodigal. Sixth in the world, the cocky youngster then fought a stunning season-long duel with Cagiva's Pekka Vehkonen in 1975. They shared 15 race wins apiece that year, but Strijbos and Wolsink illegally swapped to Davey's spare Honda after timed training in Germany and his subsequent disqualification cost Strijbos the championship by nine points!

Signed by Cagiva, Strijbos claimed a third successive Dutch GP and, also victorious in Belgium and Argentina, defeated his friend from Oss, Yamaha-mounted John van den Berk (six months Davey's senior) to secure Holland's first world motocross title. A dark-haired, olive-skinned fitness fanatic, van den Berk was a relatively shy yet outspoken young man with an incredibly pushy dad called Jo, who marketed his son's own 'JB Racing' range of riding gear! The teenaged Dutch duo was at it again in 1987. This time van den Berk emerged champion by 16 points to claim Yamaha's first 125 crown after a colossal season that also involved skinny French newcomer Jean-Michel Bayle. And in 1988 Strijbos fought a fantastic though ultimately unsuccessful 125 contest with Bayle. 'JMB' won five GPs, Dave seven, but the Dutchman lost out in a final 'winner- >>

was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...



JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he



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Place of birth	Y BUILLYN (GIRFAM)
Lieu de naissance	Y BUILLYN (GIRFAM)
Date of birth	19/12/47
Date de naissance	19/12/47
Country of Residence	ENGLAND
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DAVEY STRIJBOS
(CAGIVA) WAS HOLLAND'S
FIRST WORLD MX CHAMP

take-all' moto of the year in Switzerland, three points the cruel difference at the death. Runner-up for a fourth time in 1992, Strijbos eventually claimed 26 125 GP victories, plus the 250 Czechoslovakian round in 1990. By then under the wing of Gerard Rond, he remains the 'winningest' Dutchman on record so far.

But what of his school pal? With English mechanic Graham Kent the fast-talking, sharp-eyed van den Berk found 250GPs a relative stroll. "In 1987 I had such intense races with Strijbos that I was exhausted after every GP," he says. "I could not finish lower than second or I would lose too many points. But in 1988, if I had problems I could afford to finish eighth. I set out to learn the 250 and finish top five." He was up against Cagiva pairing Vehkonen and van Doorn and Suzuki duo Jem Whatley and American Rodney Smith (on Michele Rinaldi's new Chesterfield team). Whatley won the opener in France and Smith round two in Spain (where van den Berk claimed his first 250 moto) before 'VDB' blasted to the double round the ultra-modern, supercross style Arsago Seprio, in Italy. He also narrowly defeated Whatley in a rain-soaked British round at Frome, but it was relentless consistency that kept his rivals at bay. He never won another race yet once Whatley had broken his leg in a practice accident van den Berk ran out 250 world champion ahead of Vehkonen, Smith and van Doorn.

I talked to John as he relaxed beside his hotel swimming pool before the US GP at Unadilla, where he would match his childhood hero van Doorn as best European. "Next year will be hard for me if I am world champion this time," he admitted. "Look at Dave (Strijbos). He was world champion so young and it is so hard for him racing now. He must be world champion! It was nice when he was so young – 18-years-old – but a hard life after that..." Graham Kent



HOLLAND'S 1993 125
WORLD CHAMP PEDRO
TRAGTER

kindly dropped me off in Manhattan after the race. Apparently van den Berk had never thanked him for his devoted efforts, and never did. They parted at their successful season's end, van den Berk signing for Rinaldi, where his predictions of a hard life proved uncannily accurate. He finished third in 1989 and again in 1990, but never won another grand prix! Back at Unadilla I saw him 'hit the wall' while team-mate Alex Puzar sealed the title. "I'd rather over train," he confessed. "You need condition. When I lose a race I go training harder. It's not always the best thing but it's good for your mind."

His career never recovered. Within 18 months John van den Berk had vanished from the grand prix scene, resurfacing briefly as a Honda-mounted 500 privateer in 1995. Meanwhile a quiet, nervous young man called Pedro Tragter, riding for Suzuki, had won the 1990 Dutch 125GP and finished seventh in the series. He

improved to third behind Stefan Everts and Bob Moore in 1991 and was a member of the team that, dashingly led by van Doorn, so nearly scooped the MX des Nations from America at Valkenswaard that year. Joint second in the 1992 125 championship with Strijbos after winning the final moto of the season, Pedro became the unlikeliest of world champions in 1993, beating Yves Demaria and Strijbos by scoring in 31 out of 33 motos (the second season of a silly three race format!) and winning at home and in Italy...

And that was that, except for isolated grand prix victories. Leon Giesbers won their 500 GP at Lierop as a wildcard in 1996 and Remy van Rees the 1998 British 250 at a sticky Foxhill. Eric Eggens claimed three rounds during his 2001 battle for 125 honours with Jamie Dobb and the extrovert Marc de Rever the first of his four GP successes at Teutschenthal in 2003. Now Holland's 19 year world title drought is over



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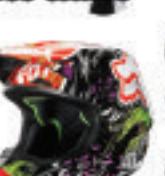


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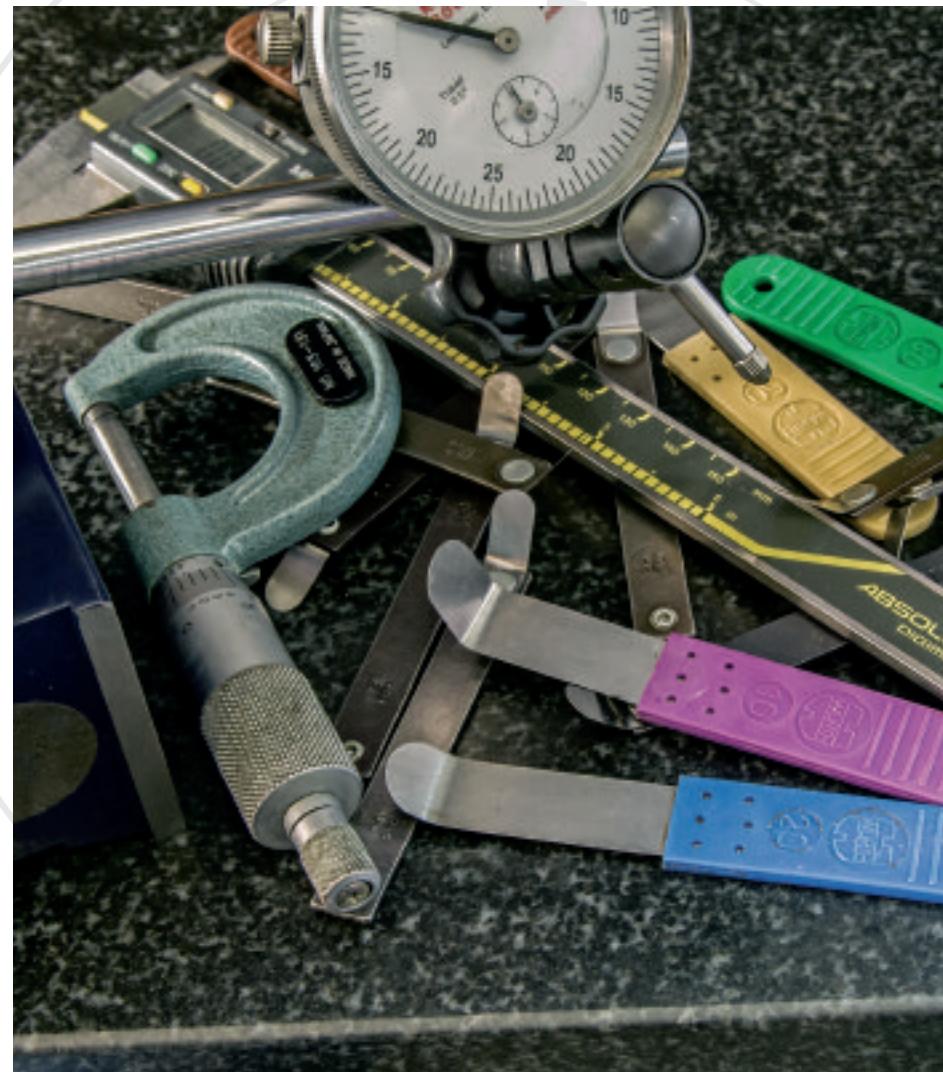


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Alittle deeper in this issue of DBR, the adventures of the RPM project (p90), working with damaged goods, is working through a programme of unearthing, repairing and/or replacing parts on three used MX machines. One of those jobs unearthed is checking valve clearances and for those with sensitive feel and a decent tool kit, you have the chance to influence your future as we take you by the hand and guide you through what many might think of a difficult job.

If you're brave enough to venture into your motor then you'll already know it's important to be clinical about the level of cleanliness required. To check valve clearances you'll need a quality set of feeler gauges, plus the ability to actually use them and record data. For many the idea of using feeler gauges is to simply slide the gauge between two static points but the sensation of feeling for the correct drag on the gauges is paramount, but which can be hard to describe on a page – we'll settle with a 'snug fit'.

Feeler gauges often come in cheap tool sets, which suggest from the outset they're not specific enough. The clearances vary

between bike models so we strongly recommend finding the specific sizes you need, which is also unlikely to come in a set of general feeler gauges.

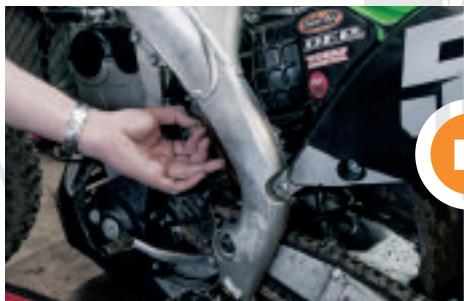
A Kawasaki, Suzuki or Yamaha will generally be 0.1 – 0.15mm for the inlet, and 0.25 – 0.31mm for the exhaust, whereas Honda strangely chose to work in imperial measurements, equating to 0.09 – 0.15mm inlet and 0.25 – 0.31mm. KTM have 0.1-0.15mm inlet and 0.12 – 0.17mm exhaust for the twin cam motors and 0.12mm for both inlet and exhaust on the older single cam models. As ever, these measurements are general and specific measurements for specific years and model must be confirming. Dr Dirt's objective is to take you through the procedure of timing the bike correctly to a condition where the measurements can be taken.

The process of checking valves is tedious, even a ball-ache, but tightening clearance is the first warning of valve coating wear, which is the top of the slippery slope leading to disaster and expense. The longer it is ignored, the more expensive the remedy but caught early enough it may only cost you a set of replacement valves and shims.

CLEARING THE VALVES!

IF YOU'RE HANDY WITH THE SPANNERS AND HAVE A DECENT TOOL KIT THEN CHECKING YOUR OWN VALVE CLEARANCES IS METTLE TO YOUR ARMOURY

Words by **ROBIN BAYMAN** photos by **ANDREW WELCH**



01 Cleanliness is everything here, preventing dirt entering the open motor, with the tank and seat removed; a quick wash will do no harm to remove all harbouring flaky dirt. Our simple tip here is to twist the brass fuel entry point downwards; any dirt falling in here could enter the fuel system and clog jets.

02 Rocker cover removal varies between bikes, most twin cam engines opt for button head collar screws with a seal, the fixings are usually 6mm studs into aluminium, they will not be overly tight. When removing the cover, beware of internal seals, the large outer seal is obvious, an 'O' ring around the point where the spark plug is located may catch you out, look for the seal as it may stick to the cover.



03 The engines stroke has to be in the correct position to take the measurement. Alignment marks are clearly evident to help you with this process, be warned, there are more than just TDC marks. Controlled engine turning is aided with a socket on the flywheel nut. The large slot headed cap in the centre of the ignition cover will allow access to the flywheel nut. As the plug cap is removed, there is no risk of starting.



04 Marks on the cam gears will give you a general idea of the position of the engine, the KXF used in the images has two marks on each cam gear, their alignment should be one dot to the top with a second pointing outwards and lining up with the casing. The reverse view will show the cam lobes pointing away from each other, mid-point between upward and outward.

05 Lower on the motor, a second spy hole is plugged by another slot headed cap, in this view further timing marks are visible to align with the casing. Beware at this point as this is where the TDC and timing ignition marks are both visible. The cams and the TDC marks should all be aligned.



06 Squeezes the feeler gauge between the cam and tappet bucket and you should feel gentle resistance. If it folds or buckles, it may be worth fitting new valves at this point, find which size feeler gauge enters perfectly to see if it's within manufacturers guide. Any variation outside tolerance suggests problems. Project RPM had a bent valve and worn cam seats. Take particular note that most exhaust valves have a greater gap than the inlet.



07 Once happy that the clearance is within manufacturers' tolerance, rebuilding is simple enough. Care is required as the delicate seals must be clean. An oily rag is the best aid here, the seals are made of material tolerant to chemicals, though some aggressive solvents may cause damage, carefully wipe the seals, their seats and all machined faces to create a good seal, any damaged seals need replacing.



08 Our penultimate check is the rocker cover itself, look for damage inside and out of the rocker cover. Inside the top, the rubber strip serves a purpose, preventing the cam chain flinging out under centrifugal force to wear through the casing, if the rubber strip is detached or damaged, change it.



09 Finally, the metal face on the fixing seals should be away from the casing. Hopefully you found the valve clearance to be correct and should be able to forget about the valve wear for a few rides, no harm is caused by occasionally checking valve clearance, it is your most dependable way of checking valve condition.



**Two world championships don't
guarantee KTM Factory rides...**

SACREBLEU

LIFE AS A FACTORY BACKED EWC STAR IS GREAT WHEN EVERYTHING'S GOING WELL. BUT AS SUPER-FAST, TWO-TIME WORLD CHAMP JOHNNY AUBERT KNOWS ALL TO WELL, THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO EXACTLY TO PLAN...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media/Jonty Edmunds

As the penultimate round of the Enduro World Championship in Finland draws to a close Johnny Aubert isn't much in the mood for talking. As KTM mechanics and team personal begin to tear down and pack up, with espresso in hand Johnny sits quietly with a distant look upon his face. 2012 hasn't exactly been a good year for the speedy Frenchman, in Heinola things go from bad to worse...

But Johnny's a professional and while it's obvious he'd rather be some place else he dutifully readies himself for the ensuing barrage of questions. Anything but his relaxed and open self, it's clear that as the 2012 racing season nears its end Johnny has a lot on his mind. Claiming his last world title back in 2009, the last three seasons have delivered more in the way of disappointment than success. Much more. They've taken their toll on France's pioneering motocross to enduro convert.

Making matters worse is the fact that to Johnny's left sits a cardboard box full of trophies, none of them his. With countryman and team mates Antoine Meo and Christophe Nambotin securing the Enduro 1 and the Enduro 3 world titles for KTM, for Johnny there's little to celebrate in Finland. Although his class, the Enduro 2 class, is yet to be decided one thing's certain – it won't be Johnny that's picks up the top spot in the prestigious #1 plate in the 450cc category.

It wasn't all that long ago that Johnny could seemingly do no wrong. Joining KTM soon after securing his first Enduro 2 world title, Johnny made it two-from-two in 2009 and in putting his name to a second 450cc powered EWC title handed KTM a title they very much wanted. He was the Austrian marque's new enduro super hero. But in securing one title in four years things haven't exactly panned out in the way KTM, or Johnny, hoped they would during recent times.

The start of Johnny's troubles began seemingly no sooner than he'd stopped celebrating his 2009 E2 title. Moved into the Enduro 1 class, and up against now team-mate Antoine Meo, the switching of a rider known for his love of 450s onto a 250f was, well, one even Johnny himself wasn't too sure about.

Records show simply that Johnny finished second in 2010, an unsuccessful season by his and KTM's standards. But Johnny rode well, and were it not for a double DNF in Italy could well

have gone one better as far as the championship was concerned.

That was the end of Johnny's foray into the Enduro 1 class. Still regarded more as a two-time world champion than a rider that failed to succeed in Enduro 1, 2011 saw Johnny move back to the Enduro 2 class. Not on a 450 but KTM brand new 350cc enduro bike. Johnny was expected to win, as Tony Cairoli had in MX1 during the bike's maiden season. He didn't.

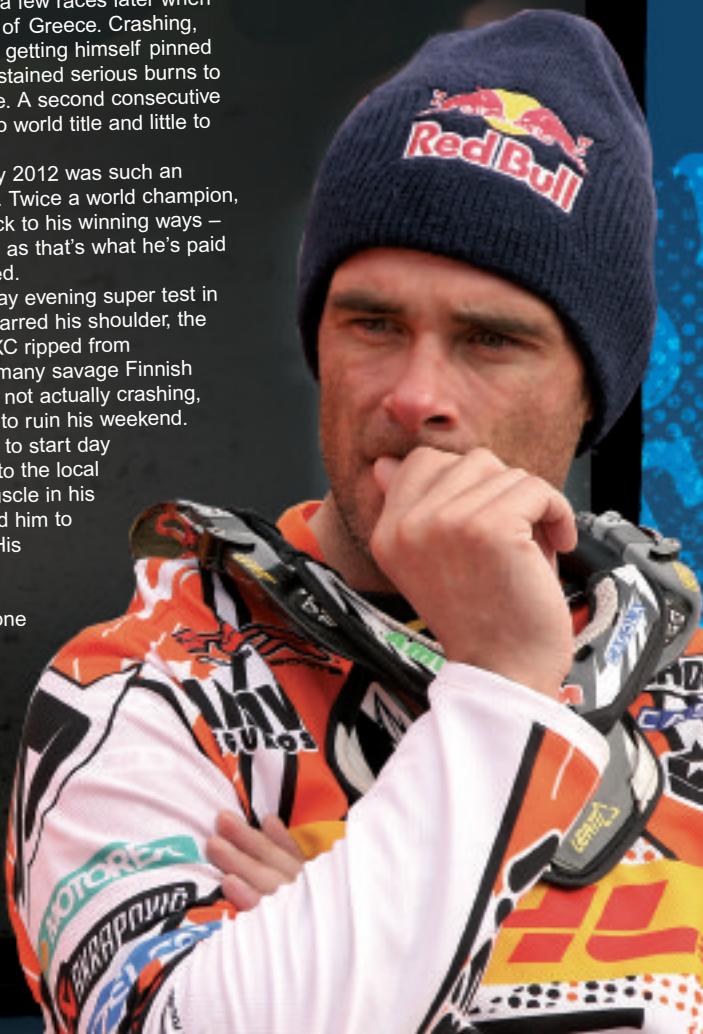
With the world's enduro press anxious to see how the Aubert/350EXC pairing would perform Johnny's title aspirations went up in smoke at the very first race. A double DNF saw the Frenchman leave the Spanish opener a full 50 points adrift of Antoine Meo. In real world terms, his title hopes were over.

Bouncing back to claim a double win the following weekend in Portugal Aubert's season permanently derailed just a few races later when he crashed out of the GP of Greece. Crashing, knocking himself out, and getting himself pinned under his bike, Johnny sustained serious burns to his leg. His year was done. A second consecutive season had ended with no world title and little to shout about.

So it's easy to see why 2012 was such an important year for Aubert. Twice a world champion, Johnny needed to get back to his winning ways – for his own sake, but also as that's what he's paid to do. That's not happened.

Moments into the Friday evening super test in Finland Johnny violently jarred his shoulder, the handlebars of his 450 EXC ripped from his hands on one of the many savage Finnish braking bumps. Although not actually crashing, the episode was enough to ruin his weekend. After gallantly attempting to start day one following a 2am trip to the local hospital, the ruptured muscle in his shoulder ultimately forced him to retire early on day one. His weekend was done.

For a competitor of Aubert's calibre – someone used to hunting down championship points with ruthless efficiency – such an incident during the penultimate round >>



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of the season should have proved catastrophic. Sadly, the reality of the situation is very different. Johnny's season was already lost, just like in 2011 and 2010.

"It's difficult to say where things went wrong this season," admits the softly spoken Frenchman. "Seven months ago this is not the position I would have expected to be at the this stage of the season. It's hard to offer any answer."

Following a successful debut ride at the Dakar Rally in South America, Aubert showed little sign of fatigue as he dominated the winter races he contested during his build up to the EWC series opener in South America. Taking in rounds of both the Spanish Enduro Championship and our very own British Sprint Enduro Championship, Aubert delivered a clinical display of dominant riding against quality opposition.

In the sunny south of Spain he trounced rivals Ivan Cervantes, Cristobal Guerrero and Juha Salminen by upwards of ten seconds

and more, while at the frosty BSEC opener in Aldershot he left David Knight and Taddy Blazusiak amongst others to fight for a distant second. By all indications the "old" Aubert had returned to form and armed with a trusty 450f many regarded him as the 'one to beat'.

"I was very happy when KTM asked me to contest the 450," explains Johnny. "For the last two season I had rode the 250f and the 350f and never gelled with those bikes. For me, I am a bigger bike rider. I love the 450, it suits my style and racing it comes natural to me so when the opportunity arose to race it I jumped at the chance."

Motivated to carry his good form into the EWC opener Johnny took the long haul flight to South America seemingly ready for the season to begin. Instantly, he was off to a strong start by posting the fastest time in the opening three special tests in Chile. Johnny, it seems, was ready to show the world he meant business.

It seemed he was on course to claim the first victory of the season until everything took a turn

for the worst in the enduro test. Situated on a local downhill mountain bike course, competitors were faced with some pretty steep single-track hills to climb. Not a problem for most of the EWC regulars, it was the local riders that sent the special test into chaos.

Unable to cope with the awkward climbs, Chilean riders lay scattered throughout the test. While some of the front runners managed to avoid the melee, others including Johnny, who due to his injury ruined 2011 season started nearer the back of the field, were caught up in the epicentre of it all. With tracks blocked in every direction, Aubert lost one-minute dealing with the situation and got pushed back to fifth overall in the Enduro 2 class on day one.

On day two he suffered a similar fate and tumbled down the leader board to 11th. Already he was off to a bad start and with only 16 points earned he was already 18 points behind in the championship chase.

Putting the season opener down to bad luck, he quickly regrouped and came out

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fighting one week later in Argentina. Grabbing a solid third overall, his championship was back on track. But no sooner than he managed to put his best foot forward, lady luck pushed him two steps back. Developing a mechanical issue with his bike, Johnny was dealt the serious blow. A much unwanted DNF.

"Chile and Argentina were a tough way to start the season. My speed was good and I felt comfortable with my bike, but it seemed like I just ran out of luck. In Chile I was fast enough to win but it's not possible to do so if the track is blocked. With only a few days to be ready for the GP of Argentina I prepared myself as best I good. I told myself it would only improve and that all was not lost. I fought hard to regroup and finished on the podium on day one. But as soon as I managed to do something positive there was a negative – on day two I didn't finish."

With a 15-hour flight home offering plenty of time to think, it was obvious a drastic plan was needed to salvage what had been lost. With the following races in Spain and Portugal proving to be his best results of the year, having been dealt such a crushing early season blow Johnny needed simply to remain focused.

"I worked hard to prepare for the back-to-back races in Spain and Portugal," explains Johnny. "I tried to focus on improving the little things that went wrong. I proved my speed was good but I just needed everything to come together. Finishing second overall in Spain was good for me, the motivation was high leading into Portugal. The feeling of winning had returned. Going there I knew conditions would suit me. I knew I could win."

True to form, Johnny Aubert was on top of his game. The hard pack, dusty cross tests were right up his street and after a battle with Pela Renet on day one, Johnny finally claimed his first, and so far only, victory of the season. On day two, he enjoyed another fight with Renet and although this time the Husaberg rider beat him, he was pleased with how he rode. He was back in the zone. But it was a feeling that didn't last too long and at the very next race in Italy any hopes of at least finishing inside the top three in the championship were lost with a double non-score.

"That was a tough couple of weeks," he answers with honesty. "When you work hard to come back and you think that everything is going to come right again you begin to lift your hopes. You think to yourself 'I'm Ok, I feel good, I know I can still win'. But then as soon as you do that it all comes crashing down. It's definitely been frustrating."

"Maybe I need to change something though I don't know what that is. I feel good in my riding and my team. The whole package appears to be complete but still something is missing. Overall it's been a difficult three years. Maybe I just need to take time out, have a vacation and reset the dials."

Although finishing second overall in the E1 class in 2010, it was a year still marred with injury due to a damaged eardrum, of all things. The following year, his season got off to fruitless start at the season opener in Spain. Winning the next three races on the bounce his year ended prematurely when he required a skin graft on his leg having become severely burned >>

Enduro racers doing whips? Geddit orn!



RALLY EXPERIENCES

MAKING THE DREAM BECOME A REALITY

It's no secret that Johnny wishes to pursue a career in rally once his time in enduro has finished. In 2012 he participated in the Dakar Rally and although he insisted he was there only to enjoy the race, he still managed to come home in a creditable 14th overall.

"In the future the Dakar Rally is something I want to try and be competitive at. I think it is possible to go there and make a good result. Maybe it is not possible to win, those guys are so fast, but I can do well. At the moment it is difficult to return. Enduro is my focus and rally is like a completely different sport. I know my technical ability is better than most but the training and preparation is unique."

"Navigation is hard to learn. You ride so fast that when you look at the road book for maybe only two seconds, you travel a lot of metres and it's easy to make mistakes. I remember crashing in a dune and as I dug my bike out, a hobby rider rides past. I think 'how is this possible, I'm two-time world champion'. So in that respect there's lot to learn. But for sure racing Dakar has always been a dream of mine and now that I've got to touch the dream I need to go there to race it properly."

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during a crash at the GP of Greece. Adding the difficulties of 2012 into the equation and it's easy to see how the last three years have gone nowhere near to plan for the one many once regarded as the fastest man in the paddock.

Now, with contract time looming, stress levels continue to rise as he, like many others, face a period of uncertainty regarding where his future lies.

In a climate of economic uncertainty, lucrative factory deals have become a little less lucrative. Team's budgets are now stretched to accommodate rising costs in travel to overseas races leaving riders with fewer doors to knock on. So what's next for Johnny, where does he go from here?

"It's not easy at the moment. A couple of years ago I would have signed a deal during the middle of the season. But now it's becoming later and later in the year before anything happens. For sure it is a worrying time for a rider to find a job for next year but I want to stay with KTM."

At the highest level of enduro sport, the window of opportunity can be a short one. With

two titles to his name but with thoughts leaning towards a future in rally is the motivation still there to win in enduro, or is Johnny simply biding his time?

"I feel like I still have one more title left in me to win," he declares, squashing rumours that he is distracted by thoughts of rally. "My goal has always been to win three world championships in enduro. I don't have a desire to be an eleven-time world champion or anything like that. That's not what drives me. For me I think it is possible to ride at this level in enduro for maybe two years more. Any longer is difficult for the motivation and focus. I believe it is necessary to enjoy riding the bike and when I sign a contract it is important that I know I have the ability to give my team a great result and repay their faith."

"Yes, I've had a difficult three years but I want to win now as much as I did in the past. Yes, it is true that I'm looking at a career in rally when enduro is done but that is in the future. Right now I'm 100 per cent committed to winning in enduro. I like to win and want that magic feeling of standing on top of the podium knowing I've been the best."



**What next for Johnny?
He's not ready for Rallies
just yet...**

TALKING HEADS

WE'RE GETTING STRAIGHT TO THE HEART OF THE DBR FLEET OF REPAIRABLES THIS MONTH STRIPPING THE CYLINDER HEAD TO FIND OUT WHAT'S UP AND HOW MAINTENANCE SAVES COSTLY PROBLEMS

Words by Rob Bayman Photos by Andrew Welch

For those who have not known the absolute pleasure of owning a bike from new, then at least be prepared to put a few spanners on the engine from time to time, the experience of working on your own bike is an education, and the costs of a few decent tools absorbed within the saving of labour charges. Let's face it, we are generally quiet happy to part with a wedge on a night out in the pub, but just one round missed every couple of months will certainly contribute if not cover the costs of a decent set of metric spanners to keep your iron rolling.

In the ever changing 'off road' motorcycle market the two-stroke trend is recovering. Look at the facts behind that demand swing and the answer doesn't take a university research degree to work it out; it's all about the cost of recovery if a four banger throws a leg out of bed. In seventeen years of writing test reports and features about bike maintenance, I must quote at least once every year that 'compared to the cost of an engine overhaul, oil changing is still the most economical maintenance you will come across'. Forget arguing that £15 per litre of oil is extortionate, or moaning about the arse ache of filter changing, my argument states clearly that the cost of parts and labour for prematurely forced engine rebuilds can be often be avoided, in addition to avoiding disruption to your riding schedule. Much can suffer in an engine through oil starvation, but one common victim of lubrication absence is the super-costly cylinder head.

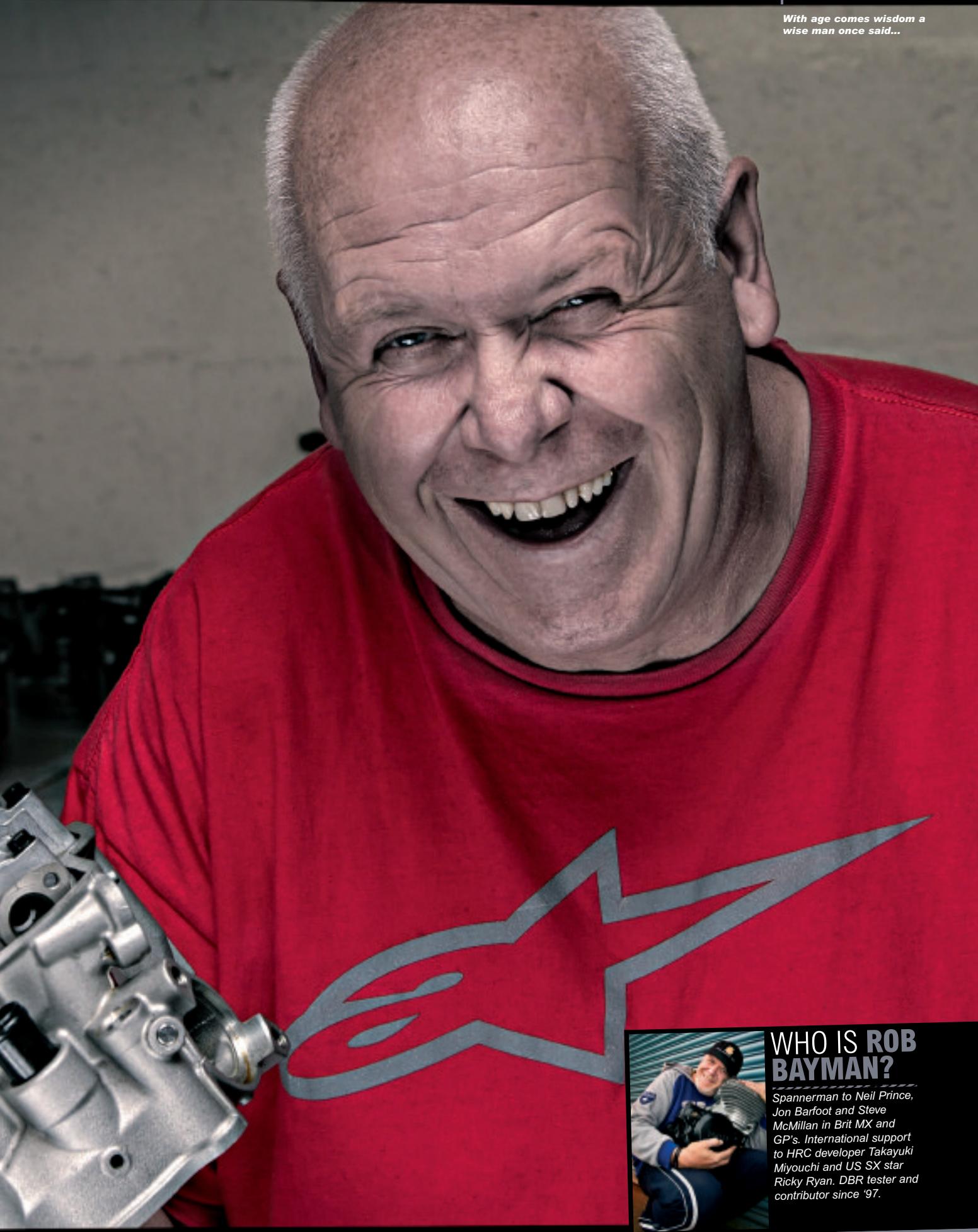
Modern water-cooled off-road bikes cylinder heads are made of cast aluminium alloy, the four-stroke usually filled with steel or titanium components. The head contains the combustion chamber, and a highly contributory source of the motor's power. The name combustion chamber is literal, it is where the explosion takes place, and consequentially where heat is generated. For sure

it may seem hotter on the exhaust as the front pipe is made of thinner metal, but that is only the afterburn of the explosion. Moderate heat is a valuable bi-product, an energy which enables a motor to run efficiently, on the contrary too much heat is damaging as it can reach the flash point of the fuel or even change the form of metal. In order to moderate the temperature, excessive heat is dispersed effectively by pumping coolant round an engine's upper hot spots via the water pump. The water pump usually takes drive directly from the crank, earlier KTM water pump runs on the cam, which sort of makes sense to me as it is local to the heat and the crank is not water cooled, however, even KTM evolved to a repositioned water pump taking drive from the crank making it more like the other bikes. We don't know why they moved it lower, but its position makes the KTM head look considerably different.

Oil does have to be pumped to the top of the engine as the camshafts and valve stems also need lubricating, splashing is not sufficient, so small passages are noticeable through the engine. Dirty or contaminated oil full of carbon deposits or flakes of the inner walls of the engine will soon clog the filter, or worse, block one of the fine oil gantries within the engine's oil circuits if the filter rips. Oil starvation will result in premature and excessive wear, we identified on Andrew's KXF the cam lobes were damaged, furthermore we know these had been investigated or at least removed as the cam saddles were not secured to the correct torque. I can imagine you wondering about the relevance of the correct torque, but we are dealing with precision engineering and over tight anchor fixings will stretch the saddle straps and restrict oil flow as the cam shafts are lubricated from within the saddles. Readers may be keen to tell me that recovery is possible, well no surprise, I already knew that, but having previously been caught cold buying

>>





WHO IS ROB BAYMAN?

Spannerman to Neil Prince, Jon Barfoot and Steve McMillan in Brit MX and GP's. International support to HRC developer Takayuki Miyouchi and US SX star Ricky Ryan. DBR tester and contributor since '97.

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a used head described as perfect, Andrew opted for new head and cams from Corby Kawasaki which is probably the safest route without knowing a donor bike's history.

The head on both two and four-strokes contributes significantly to how the power is delivered, and is often the target area for modification by tuners, in fact singularly the most effective area of work on a four-stroke once the high ticket bolt-on parts are fitted. As yet, we have no desire to try and teach you tuning, but hope to impress upon you just how important looking after a four-stroke is.

Does this scenario sound anything like your bike? A four-stroke, which always started with the first or second kick, progressively starts to pop or backfire where it previously burst into life, eventually only starting with a push before even that push fails. Unfortunately that rapid progression can be all on the same day, it's a strong sign the valve clearance is closing up, and from experience, usually an intake valve!

Why does the gap close? It is down to the oxide coating on the valve deteriorating, the coating material remains a mystery and believed to vary between manufacturers, but we do know that OEM valves are titanium, made from two pieces. The valves, head and the stem are two separate pieces, machined separately for economical purposes, then fused together before a final coating. The coating eventually wears through exposing the unprotected titanium which wears quickly, misshaping until they similarly beat the hard metal seats out of shape.

Forget shimming or lapping at this point, you are on the slippery slope leading to disaster. The only hope is that you can change the valves before the seats wear, reducing the problem. The issue here is how to identify when it is time to change the valves, and we can't advise strongly enough fitting new valves as a matter of procedure, two or three years for riders who stay away from the rev limiter, sooner for throttle jockeys or those with CDI re-mapping which produces higher revs.

For this rebuild we're using stainless steel valves from RaceFX on our re-build as we consider them to be more serviceable. They can

be re-shaped to seal the valve during routine maintenance on an annual basis but before you lose track here, the 're-shaping' process known as lapping, uses grinding paste on the valve seat and requires rotating the valve until it perfectly matches the concentric shape of its 'seat' in the cylinder head. New seats if installed are cut with precision, with cutters boasting their precision tooling to cut within a 3 micron tolerance of the valve, which is extremely precise. New OEM valves do not require lapping, in fact it will damage the coating, lapping is only for stainless valves.

Lapping is an aged process, conducted with either a drill attachment or a piece of wood with a sucker on the end to spin the valve until the grinding material mates the faces. It's likely a similar practice mechanics have been using since the first four-stroke combustion engines were built, which happened to be recorded as early as 1550BC as the bible states Moses' Triumph echoed throughout the land, and all early Triumph's were four-strokes! (You sure about this Rob?! – JP)

Unlike the KXF, our 2004 KTM450 has adjustable tappets, as do many similar engines, which basically means valve clearance is

adjusted with a screw and locknut. The checking procedure is similar enough, and clearance can self-adjust, but the corrective measure varies slightly. Most current engines have bucket tappets and shims, the clearance between the tappet and valve bucket or valve is the area to check, and corrected by different the thickness of their shims. Check out this month's Dr Dirt (p80) for our step-by-step guide taking you through the valve clearance checking procedure.

Learnt anything? We hope demonstrating how to check for valve clearances and the costly consequences of ignoring overheating and oil starvation. Other areas of neglect on the head are the springs and the timing chain, two often overlooked problem areas. The springs can weaken and fail to seal which has the early warning signs of difficult starting, but the cam chain is another often overlooked area, usually never checked by even the trained mechanics, if they stretch, oddly they stiffen up rather than go sloppy like a drive chain, the first you will know is when it snaps, which usually causes top and bottom end damage, just like the cam belt on a car, it's a common and expensive oversight.

If you need the help of the RPM team, drop us a line at notetorobin@gmail.com



Twin pipes spread the weight better to meet emissions regs

GENERATION CHANGE

HONDA'S 2013 CRF450R HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING BUT HAS THE WAIT BEEN WORTH IT AND COULD WE BE LOOKING AT A WHOLE NEW GENERATION OF MX BIKE?

Words by Ed Bradley Photos by Honda



The opportunity to test the all-new Honda CRF450R comes the day after the penultimate round of the MX world championship at Faenza, Italy. Which means that we got to sample the Honda hospitality and watch the fastest riders in the world tear it up around this awesome GP track one day and rip it up on a 2013 machine the next – tough life!

After watching the riders blast off from the first MX2 race I found myself walking as fast as I could, like an excited kid, looking over the tops of all the spectators lining the circuit to see the action as the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end. Then my first sight of the riders coming over the jumps towards pit lane was fantastic. There was very little noise as Herlings jumped in to view before the rest of the field charged behind him like a stampede of wild buffalo on an African plane.

Herlings was so sharp as he scrubbed these jumps, it was clear that these kids are pushing the boundaries for getting the maximum out of their bikes and it wasn't just the MX2 kiddies throwing their bikes around like BMXs either, the European championship guys were just the same. This new generation are racing their MX bikes at a new level.

All exciting stuff but what about the old farts

that are riding around on the 450s? Only a few years ago they were the new generation in the smaller classes and are now racing on the 450 machines. As I watched the proverbial paint dry during the first MX1 race I began to ponder whether or not there is a drawback with these big machines? A fundamental flaw in the performance of the machines as a whole – Yamaha have turned the engine around to alter the engines inertia, KTM made a 350 that's more like riding the 250F while the other manufacturers look like they've been resting on their laurels with the concept of the MX machine.

Since the fifth generation of the aluminium chassis bikes, Honda have kept a close eye on how motocross circuits and techniques are changing in the racing world and have been looking at solutions to allow the riders to get even better performance from riding their bikes.

This sixth generation machine then is completely new – well apart from the wheels and brakes! The new Honda looks the nuts too and has had more changes than the guards at Buckingham Palace!

The 2013 CRF450R has been designed for what Honda has creatively called “the scrub generation”, a bike that is easier to scrub and ride faster for longer. The pre-ride briefing told us the CRF450 is packed in and lowered for full mass centralization and has a power delivery

that is as smooth as Roger Harvey's line during the presentation “the power has more Brraaapppp” from the bottom to mid-range – technical stuff!

At first looks you can see that the plastics are completely redesigned and there are two silencers similar to those on the CRF250R a few years ago. The plastics are stronger around the mounting points and thinner and flatter in shape around the periphery, one to save weight and two to deflect mud easier. At last you can now lift your CRF 450 on to the stand easily because you can grab under the mudguard without the big silencer getting in the way, oh, and just so you know the fuel tank is 600ml larger – just in case you need to do a 40 minute moto!!!

OK so the bike looks rad but what about the new features? What's involved with the sixth generation Honda CRF450R? Let's start with the chassis and move on from there. The whole bike is focused on mass centralization and a lower centre of gravity – a bit of a theme with Honda bikes. The frame work has been based around this concept so the bike is easier to turn on the ground and in the air and feels lighter in all situations and conditions – even if this bike is roughly 1Kg heavier than the previous model!

Where the main frame spars meet the steering head pipe, the 2013 model connects more centrally compared to near the top on >>

the 2012 and has a revised steering head geometry. The shock mount is also 14.5mm lower on this new frame. The alterations at the front of the frame help lower the centre of gravity and improve traction, feel and better cornering. Only a little tweaking has been given to the rigidity of the frame to deal with the transfer of external forces more efficiently.

The swingarm has a new shape to it and is visibly larger providing more rigidity to the front and centre sections for a more precise feel through ruts. The rear axle and back section of the swing arm, however, are still the same dimension.

Connecting the chassis to the swingarm is the KYB rear shock and Honda Pro-link suspension. The shock is 14.5mm shorter to fit in with the 14.5mm lower mount in the frame to continue the mass centralisation of the bike. The KYB guys have improved the rebound and compression rates to create better handling over the rough going too. The combination of these two points means that the bike tracks with more stability over braking bumps when you have your heel stamped on the rear brake pedal and the anchors fully on!

At the front-end of the bike Honda have fitted their newly designed bike with newly designed KYB air suspension, which tickles me every time I read it because our tractor at DMP has air suspension too!

These forks are brilliant for many reasons, however, the main key is that there is a massive 800-gram saving in weight and it's easy to imagine that there is less friction when compressing air compared to steel. So if you want to alter the spring rate, instead of taking out the old springs and playing with them like some kind of Slinky, all you have to do is let a little air out to go softer or add a little to make them stiffer. Your push bike pump isn't going to work though so make sure you hold on to the original pump!

To adjust the compression, the message from the mechanics has eventually made it through to the designers and you can now alter the clickers without having to take the handlebars off or wreck the screw head by trying to make adjustments with the bars on - that took a while to come through didn't it!

As an extra gimmick to the air forks you can reduce the air pressure when you go to

strap your bike down in the van. If you're the sort who straps bikes down like Popeye immediately after crushing a tin of spinach, leaving the front fender just about touching the front wheel, this system means the forks seals don't get a Pluto-style hammering!

Performance-wise there is a dramatically faster response in transition between the compression and rebound and vice-versa, so the combination of less friction and more effective use of the fork valving means they give better, more accurate feedback and better traction compared to their predecessors.

Finally, with the chassis, the footpeg mounts are 5mm back (and 10% lighter!) to give better rear wheel traction when standing up.

The bike has received lots of mods to improve traction and power delivery to the ground so it begs the question, what have HRC and the R&D team done with the engine? After all, if the bike has a mass centralisation so that it is easy to ride faster for longer what have they done to help in the motor department?

Well, before we even get to the motor it's pretty obvious this bike has two silencers, which apart from meeting the FIM sound regulations, the extra length of pipe gives more torque to the low-end delivery of power and without the massive cannon sticking out of the right-hand-side of the bike. The two small mufflers are tucked neatly, almost under the seat of the bike, again, creating a big difference to the mass centralisation of the bike.

The Japanese have taken this mass centralisation perhaps a little too seriously because even the electrical parts dotted around the 2012 model have all been brought in to a more compact area - you've guessed it, in the centre of the bike! It's the detail that Honda put in to their bikes that makes them what they are.

In the cylinder head, the profile of the intake and outlet are slightly changed and the exhaust valves have been increased in size from 30mm to 31mm to improve the flow of the gasses. The compression has been increased from 12.0:1 to 12.5:1 due to the new domed piston top, to increase the motor's torque and to keep the under-belly of the piston slick, well lubed and



HONDA CRF 450R

Capacity: 449.7cc

Bore and stroke: 96.0 x 62.1

Transmission: five-speed

Fuel tank capacity: 6.4litres

Front suspension: 48mm

USD air fork (310mm travel)

Rear suspension: Pro link

monoshock (315mm travel)

Front brake: 240mm disc

Rear brake: 240mm disc

Seat height: 953mm

Wheelbase: 1492mm

Ground clearance: 330mm

Dry weight: 111kg

Price: £6790





2013 chassis is
designed for the whip
generation...

cool, the piston oil jet now has a brother so the pair can spray in harmony! The bore and stroke are still the same dimensions and to create even more of a smooth power delivery the flywheel is 11% heavier – by this point I knew the thing should roll!

With more low-to-mid range power there might be less need to use the clutch if the motor is putting out the power of a tractor and I am so pleased to say that Honda have changed the clutch back to a six-spring design.

The old clutch on the '09-12 models let the bike down massively with it being so stiff and after seeing the factory race bikes, both in Europe and America, using hydraulic clutch levers with the specific fittings in to the crankcases, I'm a little disappointed they haven't made it on to the production bikes yet. For now though the new clutch operation is a lot lighter than of old.

From dumping the clutch and transferring all the motors load on to the gear box, Honda have strengthened every bearing and gear to

deal with the engines extra torque so much so that the crankcases are now bigger too. And to finish off, this motor is so cool it actually has less coolant in the slightly smaller radiators saving extra weight - happy days.

Now remember that this is my first test since busting myself up and having a helicopter ride on the Kawasaki launch a couple of months ago, I'd just watched the MX1 and MX2 riders ripping around this Faenza circuit and two of them were crowned World Champs. I'm just about to start riding the most updated bike for 2013 and the track had been graded, power harrowed and rolled – excited is not the word and to add to all that, the dirt was as sticky as kids Playdough!

Sitting on the bike the handlebar, seat and footpeg relationship feels similar to previous models and the bike definitely has that sharp Honda feel to it. A quick adjustment of the levers and it's time to get on the track.

One thing I quickly seemed to struggle with was changing gear. I didn't ask if the >>

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gear lever was shorter or not but it took a while to get the hang of sticking my size 11 boots under the lever.

That was soon to disappear and fade away into the distance as I began hitting Faenza's tight turns. This machine turns on a pinhead - easily! Tight turns with ruts where a doddle so when you go to your local track and the kids have been out first creating all those awkward tight lines on there little bikes, this is the machine to make new lines on the inside of those! It's staggering how easy it is to turn this bike and how light it feels.

The back-end is subtly different too in that you can tell there is no big silencer that your leg rubs on, it's equally slim on both sides, but it actually feels like there is no silencer, side panels or rear fender. It feels that light!

And it's no different for the jumps. Gone is that old upright, heavy, 450 feel, this bike is light, easy to position and manoeuvre around in the air, almost like a 250F.

The suspension works sweet, in harmony with the chassis and the centralisation of this new piece of kit. The back-end rode a little too low for me, which would have been corrected with a little more preload, however, when forcing the bike in to the base of a couple of jumps the action was smooth and stiffened up nicely before getting to the bottom of the stroke and was perfectly controlled when unloading up the jump face too - so not at all bad.

The forks are fantastic. No harshness, just super-smooth action all the way through the stroke with no bottoming out at all, where-as by the end of the day, the rear fender had more rubber on it than Ken Block can put down practicing doughnuts!

The power is super-smooth and super-strong too. The engine picks up from nothing, low down in the revs and deceptively shoots you in to the mid-range at warp speed. The motor is so torquey that it's best to keep shifting the gears and really make the most of the low down grunt.

At one point when I was struggling to use the gear lever going up the long, fast Feanza hill, I missed a gear change and ended up revving the nuts off the bike and as soon as it hit the rev-limiter it felt like someone had switched the engine off, the power signed off that quick, which isn't a bad thing I suppose.

The rev-limiter and the big crack you get from 450s when they burn excess fuel is reduced to a mere tickle and pop with this new twin pipe exhaust system. It takes a bit of getting used to as the bike sounds so very quiet - but be ready for the crack!

For the hobby rider and club racer this motor is awesome and if you want a little more top-end power a couple of bolt-on aftermarket products would work a treat.

Honda have created a 450 that is easily one step ahead of the other bikes on the market because it is just so nimble, easy to ride and feels so light that it's going to be a winner for many riders.



Husqvarna

TURNTABLES

THREATENED CLOSURE, POOR REPUTATIONS, TAKE-OVERS AND WINNING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, IN 10 YEARS HUSQVARNA'S ITALIAN FACTORY HAS SEEN MANY CHANGES

Words and Photos by Llewelyn Pavey

Husqvarna have a colourful history. Actually that's putting in politely, about 10 years ago the world's oldest motorcycle manufacturer was as good as dead. Bikes were going to stop coming out of the little factory in Varese and the end looked nigh. Seven years later Husqvarna ended the dry spell and marked a triumphant return to off-road racing at the hands of Antoine Meo when he took the TE 250 above the might of KTM and claimed his first world title.

An awful lot has changed in Husqvarna in the last ten years. The Italian company is once again on the rise and they are aiming for the very top. From a company on the verge of disappearing under multiple collapses of former owners MV Augusta they were snapped up by BMW. Like bellows to a fire BMW are breathing life back into the once world beating company and two Enduro World Championship titles in 2011 showed they mean business.

The harder times however were not so good for

Husqvarna and their inconsistency and stereotypical Italian attitude lead to some rather brutal opinions. Parts were hard to come by, information even harder and when a company has no money, development slows down. Husqvarna damaged their reputation, badly, now BMW are trying to help them restore it and that has started at the grass roots.

When BMW took over Husqvarna in 2007 they were in the process of producing their very own enduro bike. While that now has now had its day and produced its own piece of interesting history, the focus has turned to Husqvarna. The plan was to make Husqvarna its own, solvent and self-servicing company. Aware that it wouldn't happen overnight as well, Husqvarna got a new factory at the back end of 2009, the idea was to bring all production and management under one roof.

With the recent history of inconsistency from the production lines and the bad reputation they had decided BMW would do what it does best and make efficiency the main priority.

THE FACTORY

Sat on the edge of Lake Varese and just a stone's throw from their previous owners at MV, BMW completely rebuilt Husqvarna's factory from the ground up. As you roll through the drive, a glass fronted showroom and house size picture of former factory rider Bartosz Oblucki greet you.

The reception doubles as a showroom and shop of everything Husqvarna. It's big, it has way too much glass and features some cool items of memorabilia. There are some factory race bikes, but only one pre-Italian era production piece. There are some nice race bikes too, Alex Salvini's beastly MX3 title winner and Adrien Chareyre's S1 title steed. The rest of the showroom is made up of BMW-era bikes however, with few references to the MV days, and even less to the glorious Swedish days of old.

After signing an indemnity that was promptly given to us to keep (some strange Italian law) the group of journo's, riders and hanger's on were shuttled across the rather warm courtyard toward the production facility, where a little briefing was given detailing what we may and may not do.

Things have changed since BMW became the parents and the name of the game has become efficiency and consistency, as you'd expect. All manufacturing is done off site by external companies and at Husqvarna they concentrate solely on building exactly the same bike for every customer.

It seems BMW's aim is to remove the human element from their workers, by making everything idiot proof. Stepping onto the factory floor, you are greeted by a couple of hundred or more ready-to-ship bikes.

Straight away the German penchant for quality control becomes clear. BMW really have put their foot in the door here, in-fact I think they got a whole leg in. On the outside wall are a series of booths, filled with Italians chaps with microscopes, opened engines, cranks and cylinder heads. Opposite the offices is a bay labelled 'Selezione Area Qualità' (but you weren't allowed in there right Llel? – JP)

The Factory manager was very proud of their latest new development, a single bike production line. It gives them the ability to produce one-off versions of a bike very quickly, for the purposes of new models and prototypes. Made up of a selection of rolling benches, around a bike bench it's a cool idea.

Lining the various different production lines, where engines and other components are

assembled, are hundreds of parts boxes on various Meccano-esque rolling frames. Each box has a little BMW stamped on it, each bay has exactly what it needs, nothing more, nothing less and is stocked to the brim with nuts, bolts, spring and clips.

At the end of the strangely empty engine assembly line is another pre-fab office. Inside is an engine on a rig, will oil lines and computers everywhere. It's a cold-testing bay, every engine comes from the production line to this area.

Each engine is run for a period of time, without spark, turned over by an external motor, with gas flows and a whole bunch of other tests carried out. The engines are then oil pressure tested and if it's good it gets carted off to the assembly line, if not it's taken away and dealt with...

I'm sure it's something most manufacturers do, but for Husky it's this sort of change that is bringing them into line with the world's biggest companies. These are the changes that are seeing a positive reputation develop.

A few steps away a TE 449 is sat on plinth, surrounded by notice boards, pie charts and covered in little orange arrows. They explain that once a week the whole production team has a meeting here, where all the figures and problems from that run of production are brought up. All the problem areas on models are highlighted with the little areas and the staff are encouraged to come up solutions to problems.

On the walls are performance charts, recording everything from consistency of assembly to a list of the worst suppliers. There are more charts and lists than my mind has room for, every member of the various teams is put under scrutiny, be it for good or bad. It seems brutal but BMW clearly feel that it's necessary to achieve an acceptable level of consistency.

Husqvarna are not shy in letting us see that their bikes have issues either, there are warning notices everywhere, a big red sign has TXC 310 steering stem nut came loose scrawled across it. Instead of shying away, they are proud to admit that while there are issues they are putting all their effort into solving problems and not being the company who stares back blankly with the words 'we have never heard of your problem ever'.

ASSEMBLY TIME

The final assembly line is the one area that has been subject to the most effort. As with the other areas of the factory, the human error element has been squeezed to the point that it almost can't exist.

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The production line is a thing of beauty and efficiency. Every single work station does only the areas and bolts they need to do. Every worker has an electronic torque wrench that is connected to the whole computer network. Each worker must work in a specific order and the wrench is preset to specific numbers.

Each part is scanned into the system before it's fitted, then torqued to the amount determined through the computer network. This is then recorded into the system. Somewhere in the building a giant computer server figures out whether each worker moves quickly enough, the exact torque of every bolt on the bike and produces all the pretty, coloured charts to study.

It's an impressive system, the numbers are very precise and the production team are fully aware of how quickly they can do everything. It takes exactly seven minutes to change the production line for a different model, that's impressive, but it's more impressive that they know. The production line was running at 73% efficiency during the week we visited. As far as they are concerned it's not good enough, the aim is 75% every single week.

To my ears that seems incredibly low, but when you consider the parameters required to meet the targets, much of the margin is time based. There isn't enough room for human error so speed becomes the major factor.

All the time our guide talks about maintaining efficiency, producing batches of bikes and not wasting time and money. It's cold and soulless to talk about motorcycles in this way and very long way from the TM factory that I visited a few months earlier. However in a strange way it's music to my ears.

There's nothing more horrible than the thought of an historic company like Husqvarna disappearing from the sport and if that means they have to become brutally efficient to produce great bikes then I'm all for it.

At the end of the production line, each finished bike is run and tested on a dyno. If there were any mistakes along the way, the computer knows and if anything and I mean ANYTHING is wrong, then the bike is put into a group with paper labels stamped with 'Not Okay'. The problems are fixed and noted. Once the bike is corrected it is re-tested, with all issues being brought up at the next team meeting.

It really is good to see that there is an attitude to making right all the wrongs in the Husqvarna empire. They were once one of the iconic brands of the sport, just watch 'On Any Sunday' and you'll know the history is there. They are still a long way from the might of the Japanese and KTM but they are capable of producing good bikes that look great and if they do manage to develop a good level of consistency in their

product, bike sales will follow.

The one thing that surprised me most about the factory was the atmosphere. You'd expect such a ruthless attitude to work to create a tense and unhappy environment. While you can only make a factory floor feel so cheery, there are little bits of humour all around, from dressed up manikins in work areas, to little 'wife' jokes. That is refreshing.

Around the back of the factory floor is the race shop too. It's great that they are still connected as well, development comes through racing bikes and if the feedback can be delivered by walking across the car park then it can only be a good thing.

There is still the occasional hint toward some of the problems of past however, a request to avoid photos of staff due to potential litigation and Union issues that might follow. As a whole however it seems Husqvarna are headed in a very positive direction, one that can only be good for the sport. How can having another serious challenger be a bad thing for any of us?

They are working hard to create an all encompassing brand, with pacifiers and flip-flops for everyone. It's going to be a long road to the top, remember it took KTM twenty-odd years from a broken brand to an AMA motocross title but it seems Husqvarna have jumped on that train as well.

THE FULL MONTY

**FROM SMALL TIME BEGINNINGS TO ICONIC MULTIMILLION DOLLAR BUSINESS,
100% TOOK A SIDE-STEP FOR A WHILE BUT IN 2012 THEY'RE BACK, FOCUSED
ON GOGGLES AND SWIGGING HOMEBREW BANANA TEQUILA...**

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

There is a maxim spouted somewhere about greatness coming from the unlikeliest of sources. In a decidedly insalubrious neighbourhood of down-and-outs in downtown San Diego the saying would seem to be spot-on.

Among these derelict buildings and the graffiti sits the new headquarters of refreshed iconic brand '100%'. The facility is located next to a busy kennel and while the incessant echoes of barking form an audible backdrop, there is an inescapable feeling that the two 'big dogs' of this unlikely hub of activity are quietly behind desks working on the next chapter of their phenomenal saga.

Marc Blanchard and Ludo Boinnard – two French 'imports' into the vast SoCal American motorcycling industry – forged their story through the last two decades and among other achievements are perhaps best known as the creative and driving force (Blanchard the designer, Boinnard the business acumen) behind One Industries.

In relinquishing control of their carefully constructed 'baby' (as Blanchard refers to the firm on a pleasant San Diego afternoon sprinkled with swigs from a homemade bottle of banana tequila) in 2006 the partnership idled professionally and enjoyed some downtime.

Boinnard ended his life-long Enduro and rally fascination with a successful 2010 attempt at the Dakar and then embarked on a new venture with ski company Klint – until the chance to breathe fresh life into defunct brand 100% provided an exciting opportunity to collaborate with Blanchard once more.

100% re-launched as a dedicated goggle brand at Anaheim in January 2012 and the excitement around the project is partly a result of the industry's heightened curiosity to observe and chart Blanchard/Boinnard's next move. Their rise from a pair of dreamy immigrants united by a love of off-road bikes to pinnacles of a mammoth scene is an engrossing tale.

10% - ORIGINS

Ludo: I was an Enduro racer in France and my girlfriend at the time was a student in the States. I had nothing going on so I left to join her. I had some ideas but no plan. I was 22. I could see from the Six Day Enduro that the level here was a bit lower than in Europe so I figured I could do some Enduro. I was a chase rider for a year and it was pretty cool but I needed to work so I became an independent export manager for quite a few brands, like FMF, IMS and DeVol. I moved from San Francisco to LA and soon met

some Italians who were starting Braking and they wanted to go big quickly. We did a subsidiary of the company here in the States and I was a partner. I developed Braking and came up with the oversized kits in motocross, nobody had any idea of the replacement disc business at the time.

Marc: My childhood dream was to come out to the U.S. ever since I discovered the American press with all those Bob Hannah and Marty Smith stories and a library back home that regularly stocked 'Motocross Action'. I was sixteen and couldn't understand a word but was fascinated by the Californian dream. When I started at Motoverte [seminal French magazine] a lot of those guys were focusing on the American scene. Bercy came in and those riders showed up and that amplified my desire to check it out. Working with Motoverte allowed me to get closer to the industry travelling to the GPs where I met the owners behind JT - John and Rita Gregory. He said I could have a job working over there on his catalogue and adverts and I thought 'how can this be possible? They hardly know me...'. I was sceptical but the following year, again at the Motocross of Nations he said: "What are you waiting for man? It's been a year now..."

20% - THE SCENE

Ludo: They call it the land of dreams or opportunity but I think that you can always see opportunities if you visit a foreign country. You see things with a different eye and mindset. It is up to certain people to seize the ideas and make them happen. When I first came here there was not much to work with: a fax machine with thermal paper! The computers were all PCs, Macs were small business, no emails, all business done by Fax. It was a different world compared to today.

Marc: The off-road scene has always been bigger here. In Europe we had the GPs, Bercy or the Nations but here it is Supercross and the stadiums were full. It was incredible to watch it as a kid from Europe, so being with JT was amazing and it was one of those big brands from my childhood. It was an opportunity too good to pass up.

Ludo: I could see brands that were very popular in the U.S. were virtually unknown overseas and those guys - at that time - had no idea what was going on abroad. I saw an opportunity to help them develop an international business and that is how I started, as an export manager for American brands. This is something you only see because you are coming from the outside.

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Even though the U.S is a country some people love to hate for various reasons it is still a country that a lot of people look up to. As far as consumerism, lifestyle image...there are some amazingly good things here. When people look at action sports then it is all about the U.S. because we know how to make it better and bigger.

30% - PARTNERSHIP

Marc: I stayed with JT for eight years and for the first two I had to acclimatise to the lifestyle. I was driving an old Camaro down the 5 highway into downtown and I could see the bay and it all seemed surreal. I used to be in Paris in the rain! So I took the good with the bad and it was tough to start from scratch and also learn English at the same time.

I had met Ludo briefly in France at an Enduro and then again in California. Being French out here at the time was pretty special because there was nobody else. There was no Bayle, Tortelli or Vuillemin only Eric Peronnard [famed race promoter]. At the beginning Ludo was talking to me about Enduro and I was like 'I don't care about Enduro, why is this guy talking to me for hours about it on the phone?!'.

I started to have this idea about the graphics and stickers and I needed to find a partner. I hooked up with Danny Dobey who was also at JT. I knew how to design the product and he knew how to sell it but we needed someone who could actually build the team and run the day-to-day business.

Ludo: Marc wanted to start something and he had helped me a lot with my businesses with designs so it was only natural that we hooked up, made a team and put our ideas on the table. I moved to San Diego. I sold Braking back to the Italians and I focused on One Industries in January 1997.

Marc: I learned how to trust him because over the years a lot of moments came up through life

and through business and you realise who you can count on. He gets on my nerves sometimes. I'm not going to lie! It happened a lot through the time at One Industries but I'm sure it is the same for him. I'm not perfect and neither is he and we made mistakes but we respect each other. He is like a rock and he is also the one that 'goes for it' when I'm a bit timid and then on the other side I slow him down a bit when he's over-revving.

40% - THE SUCCESS

Ludo: I knew the economy was in good shape and growing at the time that we started One Industries and we expanded our business in the best years so we got really lucky. People say 'you were lucky with this, lucky with that, lucky to be in the States' and I think 'was I lucky to buy a plane ticket to be here?!'. You make some of your own luck. Of course the timing can be called luck but it is also about reflection and knowing when to move.

Marc: I was watching a lot of the mistakes that were made at JT. I was thinking 'man, I wouldn't sign those guys, or I wouldn't order too many of those' stuff was going on that didn't make sense to me. It gave me a bit of guidance for the future. John and Rita were super-cool and took me under their wing. I wouldn't be here without them. What I learned was basically the business side of moto, working for a brand with competitors. At JT I was designing the product and watching it coming in and it was pretty cool, I really liked that part.

Ludo: The economy was not a big deal to us then. We didn't look at the Nasdaq or the Dow Jones and didn't know anything about it. We didn't look at bike sales or competitors or the market that much. We had the attitude of 'who cares? Let's do our own thing'. We wanted to make stuff that was cool and fun and things that fans of the sport – as we are – would love. If you really do something that you love - and you are part of that group of fans or enthusiasts and you

know what you are making is OK - then you will be fine if you put the work into it.

Marc: It is tough to build a brand and it takes time for people to realise who you are and what you do. For them to start enjoying your products and embracing your brand. It is not easy but it is a very rewarding feeling when people react to it. I always tried my best to make sure that

Motoverte was the coolest magazine out there and at JT pushed a lot to make the coolest products but when you are not in control of the business aspect you miss a lot of the possible rewards.

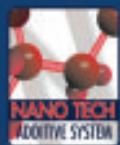
Ludo: Marc came up with the name and was thinking of it for two years while at JT. He called me, convinced me and we went at it. I was surprised we did well right away and made a million in the first year and I had no idea we would go to the level that we did. Looking back we created great things but if One Industries disappeared today then in ten years nobody would remember.

50% - RETIREMENT?

Ludo: What we did was great but it was ten years of work going from zero to twenty million and, to me, it was a chapter. There were groups showing up every once in a while with money and it was the chance to put my family out of any trouble for the long run. When opportunity knocks like that....

Marc: I never wanted to jump out. We got to a point at One Industries where we were comfortable enough to do what we wanted. If we wanted to take out ten page adverts and release some cool stuff then we could afford it. We could afford to hire good people too, so the team was solid. Selling the company was a good thing but I also thought it was too early for me because we were at the beginning of a decent story.

Ludo: I took a few years off after selling One Industries, bought houses here and there, >>



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and we had a third child as my wife and I both owned Tag Metals and sold that to the same people who bought One Industries. I had been rallying since 2001 and I always had 2011 as the date I would quit.

Marc: We sold it almost at the peak but I think we could have stayed onboard and continued to be successful even though the economy was going down. I think we would have been able to ride the wave. Ludo was ready to go out and ride his rally bikes, which I totally understand, and the offer was too good but the plan for me was to continue working. I didn't think I would retire because I'm passionate about motocross.

Ludo: Eventually one of the motivations for coming back to work was to do with lifestyle. I don't think I am old enough to retire and also your kids are looking at you and you need to be an example. They need to understand that it takes work to make things happen.

Marc: When Ludo left, One Industries was very different and not that fun any more for me. I had that same feeling towards the end of Motoverte and JT where I thought 'this is not me'. That's why I took some time off. I was in a position that I could afford it but it was great to step back and take some time with the family.

Ludo: I was meeting other people and looking for something else. I'm from the mountain region in France and my family have been into skiing for

what-seems-like forever and I found myself with a different venture. Klint is a fun project. I don't know the Ski industry and the sport all that well so it is a great learning experience; I really enjoy it.

Marc: I always thought I would start something again and it was pretty obvious I would stay near the sport. I love to work and wanted to do something else. There was something unfinished about One Industries...

100%

Ludo: Marc left One Industries two years ago. He is older than I am but he wanted to go back to work really quickly so I said 'hey, I have 100%' and he said 'no way!' The reason I bought 100% was because I didn't want to go through the process of creating a whole new brand again. The economy had also taken a dump. It started four days after we sold One Industries actually. July 27th is when we sold and I remember being in Brazil at a rally in the first days of August and seeing news on my iPhone and thought 'wow'. Over the next two years people were saying to me 'good timing...'

Marc: Ludo was involved with the Ski business but called me one day and said 'I have the chance to purchase 100%, are you in?' of course I was in! Even at One Industries I always liked 100%, the brand, the look and what it stood

for. I thought it was too bad that it hadn't been bigger because it was a cool name and I could see in my head what I would do with it. Like 'One' it is a name you can apply to a lot of sports, not necessarily just motocross.

Ludo: 100% has always been a good brand and the owner had bad luck on many levels. It has never been damaged and has been 'underground'. It is part of motocross Americana. It is an iconic badge of honour and I loved it and so did other people that I spoke to about it. I jumped on it.

Marc: When the One Industries chapter finished there was the one thing we hadn't done and we always wanted to do. The competitors are not small fry, they are people like Oakley, Scott, Smith and Spy...those guys are enormous...

Ludo: The thing that is closest to the brain and the soul of the rider is the goggles. People say to us 'why goggles?' but I see a lot of people not doing the product right on many levels. When you take a company that is really focused on moto, focused on goggles and that has its distribution together so the product is carried properly by the retailer and there is no discounting or fighting going on then there is nobody hitting the mark.

Marc: To start a goggle company and think you are going to kick the competitors' ass is stupid. We are not here for that. At One Industries we wanted to do eyewear at one point but it is not something you can do overnight. We did helmets and casualwear and probably would have had some goggles at a stage on the road. I always liked that product. So we started sketching and doing some research.

Ludo: Our friend Jerome Mage – who is a designer based over here that was actually an intern for Marc at JT and who was pushed to the Simo brothers at No Fear to create Spy – has a lot of experience with goggles and was no longer working for Spy. He has his own design studio in LA and is doing great. We approached him and he helped us reach that quality and uniqueness in the product. We hired some more people and it took a lot of work and development but we wanted a unique product that looks and works differently. It is really a motocross goggle brand that is independent from everybody and everything.

Marc: Being a designer is my job and it's what I like. Right now I'm doing the catalogue. I still get inspired....I love all that! It is still a small project and I have time to search for ideas. We had so much on our plates during the last days at One Industries that there was no time to stop and say 'let's think about some new ideas'. We were just trying to meet deadlines. Here it is still small enough for me to really enjoy the search.

Ludo: For 100% I know the market and I know the people in the industry so well it is very easy for me to know who to bring into the operation. I know how to staff that moto company very well and it requires less presence from me. I'm not really a 'front person' anyway.

Our goal is to be a goggle brand in the moto world. People are already saying 'when are you gonna do helmets and graphics?' because 100% at one point was a graphic company but when I sold Braking I didn't go back into the brake business, when I sold Tag with my wife there was no question of going back into the handlebar or sprocket business. One Industries? We've done the helmet thing and it succeeded. We did the graphics thing and it succeeded. To us 100% is really a goggle brand and we hope people will like it as much as we do.

-50%

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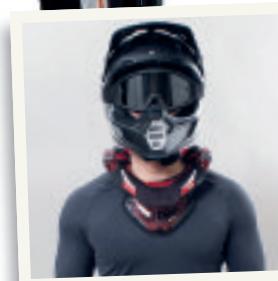
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KIT AND KABOODLE!

THE DBR TEST CREW HIT GIDDY HEIGHTS THIS MONTH WITH A FULL-FAT FACTORY AMA RIDE FROM KAWASAKI AND KEEPING OUR FEET FIRMLY ON THE GROUND WITH TCX BOOTS

Words by Team DBR



KX450F-SR FACTORY BIKE

TESTER: GEOFF WALKER

This DBR Tested is a bit of a special. It is not often you get the full factory treatment for a test but add a 24 hour race program in California to the mix and you have the ultimate test. This real-deal factory KX450F-SR was the one I got to race as part of the DR team at the 24 hours of Glen Helen. It's a special piece of kit so we thought it only fair to give you a run down of the beautiful bike we tortured for a full 24-plus hours...

What a bike to be presented with to take to any track. The very highest level of preparation on the Monster Energy Kawasaki 450 Off Road special brought a smile to my face as I could tell that this bike was put together by professionals. Assembled alongside the bikes of Villapotto in the Monster Energy Kawasaki HQ and I could

tell absolutely every part of this bike was perfection, new and polished – I could have stood and looked at it for 24 hours!

There is something special about a Kawasaki prepped to this level which is close to my heart. It is maybe because I have worked for a factory race team in my past, or it may just be my appreciation of hard work, but the colours, sparkle and engineering quality of this package left nothing to chance.

The seated and standing comfort on the bike was outstanding as you expect from every modern bike these days. The Renthal Twinwall bars are a tad on the rigid side for my liking when it comes to endurance racing but the strength cannot be denied. The half waffle grips cannot be faulted and the Works Connection

levers add another touch of class to the cockpit of the bike.

We had the good fortune to run a Baja Designs light system which blended in across the top of the bars nicely. This is the coolest light unit on earth right now. The weight-to-light ratio was unreadable while riding and the fact it turned everything into daylight during the darkest Californian mountain hours made for fast lap times and easy night riding. I cannot fully describe how much light this unit gave out during the race. The track became easier to ride with the help of Baja Designs and the amazing skill they have in turning night into 'light'.

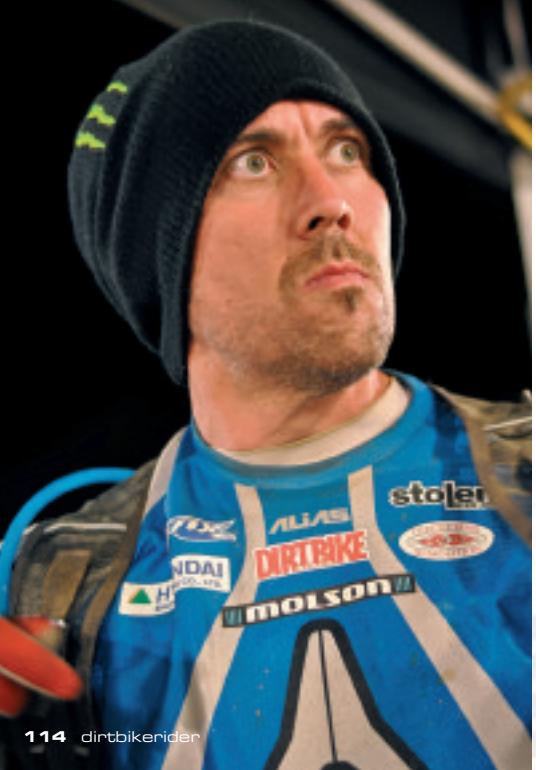
The suspension on the Kawasaki US's Off Road bikes is taken care of by northern California's legends of fluid movement, Fox >>

Shox. The Kawasakis are hitting the front in Endurocross and WORCS racing with the help of the guys at Fox Shox which shows the units have the ability to run perfectly in different race situations. The 24 hour bike was set for full-on, full-gas racing at warp speed mind you! This was not ideal for the Glen Helen event as a forgiving dirt bike is required to keep everyone fresh and circulating. But as a team we worked on it over the event and the bike I rode after 22/23 hours did not resemble the bike I started off the race on. Jason and the crew softened the suspension at stages during the race and we eventually found a more forgiving setting which allowed all of us to use the bike to its potential.

The motor was fairly stock with just a few in-house tweaks for extra running strength. We ran a race fuel mapping which made the bike a fire-breather but when I got used to the power and the suspension started to move through its stroke, then the motor was a joy in the fast parts of the track. The clutch did not need to be adjusted once in all my rides as every rider was doing a great job of finding a flow on the track across the different kinds Californian of terrain.

I want you to imagine doing an entire year's riding on your bike in one hit. That is basically what the KXF had to endure. An average club racer rides around 24 hours in a season and this is what our race machine had to go through. The bike basically never stopped long enough to get anywhere close to cooling down. The longest stop was around 4/5 minutes for a change of wheels, filter and a tweak to the compression side fork leg. We absolutely punished this bike and every rider pushed its limits at some time during the race duration. Nothing came loose, nothing broke and nothing bent even after a couple of fairly hefty crashes from Messieurs York and Barrett.... Crunch... We took this bike to hell and back and it took it all without a problem. Ok so it was factory-prepped but it took a beating and came out the other side.

To round-up on the Monster Energy Kawasaki USA KX450F-SR Off Road machine I would have to say it was an unbelievable blast to take this bike from an un-rideable, fire-breathing monster to a very rideable, very fast endurance racer in a 24 period of full-on race action. What a ride...!



© Jason Bellinger

TCX PRO2 BOOTS

TESTER: JON PEARSON

The kit you wear can change over the years, as it wears out, you bust it or grow out of it (although I stopped growing a while back!). Boots, like my helmets, are something I keep coming back to time after time, getting well and truly attached to the ones I like. My TCXs are the ones I keep coming back to.

The reasons I'm so attached to them are simple enough: they're pretty light, I've had some leg-crushing/ankle twisting moments in them and they've always (touch wood) kept the old feet fit for dancing, they also fit well and last me for ages. All of that is another way of saying when I try other boots they always seem heavier and less comfy and haven't lasted as well.

The Pro2s have TCXs torsion control external armour which limits movement in the wrong direction plus toe, shin, heel guards mask

Comfy boots unless your monkey toes are too long!



general knocks. Since the up-grade to the 2.1 model there's more comfort inside too.

I've used them a lot of course, these and previous sets, for enduros, MX tests plus hours and hours standing track side teaching people to ride off-road – which is where the only criticism comes in. This was also true of the older model TCXs, less so with the 2.1, but the inner boot can pinch up the toes when you've been standing in them a long time. Sometimes when I've had them on all day my toes have well had enough of being in there. A 'modification' care of Rally legend Cyril Despres helps – take the sole out the inner boot and choose your socks carefully!

Price: £279.99

Supplier: www.nevis.uk.com

ROCKSTAR BUDDIES

THIS MONTH IT'S THE TURN OF TEAM ROCKSTAR BUD RACING KAWASAKI PILOTS DYLAN FERRANDIS AND VALENTIN TEILLET TO FACE OFF FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE.

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

DF: "Jim Carey, he's a funny guy!"

VT: "I think it would be a comic actor because I think in real life I am a bit of a comic character, so maybe someone like Jim Carey."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

DF: "I don't think that I've ever done that!"

VT: "That was a long time ago, maybe six or seven years ago when I was young."

DBR: What was the last lie that you told and who was it to?

DF: "Maybe it happened last month but I really don't do it often so can't remember who it was to."

VT: "Hmmm I think I better keep that to myself!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

DF: "No way!"

VT: "No I've never done that, I just trust my mechanic."

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

DF: "I think that would be milkshakes and ice cream."

VT: "I know it's really bad but I know most motocross riders eat this and that's McDonald's...only once a month though!"

DBR: You're in second and on the leaders rear wheel, do you take him out on the last corner for the win?

DF: "I wouldn't take him out but would try as hard as possible to pass him cleanly."

VT: "To be honest I'd prefer to do it cleanly, I've never been a dirty rider. For sure if you're in second and could take the GP win you are going to do your absolute best to win but I'd prefer to pass him correctly than win having taken him out."

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas?

DF: "No just boardshorts."

VT: "No, no, when I was young but that was a long time ago."

DBR: What is the highlight of your career so far?

DF: "For sure the GP of Sweden where I got my first podium and two holeshots, it was a very good one."

VT: "I think it was when I won the European title, it was for me a very nice moment, it was the first title that I got and it was in a very good way because I won 10 races. I was very happy for my parents and all of the staff who were working with me."

DBR: What car do you drive?

DF: "A Renault Traffic van."

VT: "I have two cars but usually it's my Audi A3."

DBR: What car would you drive if money were no object?

DF: "I don't really know as I'm not a big fan of cars. I would just like one with a place for my bike, maybe a pick-up or something."

VT: "I like Audi's so I'm going to say Audi A8."

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent "mechanical issue"?

DF: "No, not blamed a bad result on it, sometimes if I have a bad feeling on the bike then I will tell the mechanic that there's something not right with it."

VT: "No I'm not like this, I think I'm honest and I never try to make any excuses, when it's my fault it's my fault."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

DF: "I have a problem with my right knee so I'd like to have that fixed."

VT: "Maybe to be able to keep it on two wheels this season! I'm really focused on this but it's been really difficult, maybe it's more a mental thing."

DBR: If you could meet any person, past or present, who would it be?

DF: "Travis Pastrana."

VT: "James Stewart."

DBR: If you could have any super power for a week what would it be?

DF: "To feel no pain and be unbreakable...to be invincible!"

VT: "To win everything that I enter."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an Island, what three things would you want with you?

DF: "For sure the first thing would be to have a bike to ride around on, I'd like to have my family there and I'd like to have my friends there."

VT: "My dog, my phone and my iPod."

DBR: What's your most prized material possession?

DF: "My iPhone."

VT: "My trampoline that I have at home, it's very good exercise for motocross."

DBR: Favourite race you've ever been in?

DF: "The GP of Sweden this year, I had my first podium so that's it."

VT: "Brazil 2009 I got third in the GP and I think it's one of the best moments I've had you know. It was my first year in GP's, I had a good start and was battling with Roczen all of the race so it holds good memories for me."

DBR: Be honest, do you Google yourself?

DF: "Oh yes!"

VT: "(Laughing)"Of course...but just to look at the pictures!"

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

DF: "I'm not too fussed on the colour of her hair."

VT: "Maybe more blonde."

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

DF: "Yeah I think so...but hmmmm!"

VT: "I can't say because it's not the same feeling."

DBR: One thing about your riding style that you'd like to improve?

DF: "I'm always trying to improve my style, I always try to look like Chad Reed. I don't think my style is as bad as some riders but I definitely want to try better whips."

VT: "Maybe my corner speed, it can always be better."

DBR: What's your favourite film?

DF: "Snatch."

VT: "Sex Friends with Ashton Kutcher."

DBR: Your most annoying habit?

DF: "If I have a bad race then I'm pretty bad to be around for maybe 1-2 weeks!"

VT: "I normally try to be a pretty cool guy but there are times when I need to concentrate, there are times when people come to see me but I need to be relaxed and concentrate and if that happens I just don't look up at them. People may think I'm being rude but it's just that I need to be concentrating."

DBR: If you could change one motocross related decision you've made during your career what would it be?

DF: "I'm pretty happy with how things have gone so far so probably nothing."

VT: "Maybe to change 2010 as I didn't make the best decisions for me. I didn't do the best training in the winter and maybe didn't have the best material to work with."

DBR: If you had to permanently give up either the internet, mobile phone or TV which would it be?

DF: "For sure TV as I don't watch much at all."

VT: "Television."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

DF: "I live in the South West of France so every week I go surfing."

VT: "People may think that I am very serious but when I have fun with my friends then I have fun wide open!"

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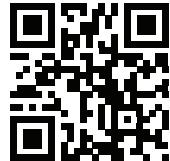
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JUNIORS GO GO!

INCREASED STATURE YEAR-ON-YEAR AND GENUINE WORLD CLASS RIDING MADE THE 2012 JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ONE TO REMEMBER IN BULGARIA...

Words by David Bulmer/vurbmoto.com Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

After the spectacular Festival of MX at Matterley Basin, a lot of the fastest juniors in the world had to pack up their motorhomes and prepare for the 1600 mile drive south-east to Bulgaria, where the Junior World Championships were happening. It was nothing compared with the journey Australians, Americans and Venezuelans had to make, but it's testament to the importance of the event that so many of the best young MX racers around the world made the trip to Sevlievo, that makes this event a must-be, and must-see, race on the calendar.

The Junior World Championships is now in the third year of its latest incarnation, with the addition of the 65cc class to the 85 and 125 classes. It is also now an event which is taken a lot more seriously around the globe with more riders and better promotion than its early days, when non-existent results and myths of James Stewart losing to Kevin Strijbos have no proof –

other than from those who were there.

MXGP promoters Youthstream are now fully in control of this event and pushing hard to make it the most important Junior event in the world – to the extent that they postponed the meeting for two weeks, so as not to clash with the closing ceremony of the Olympics. The addition of Team USA helps add some spice to the event too (especially as they are the winners of the two previous team events), and with a strong Australian contingent, and many riders from South and Central America, this really is a Junior version of the Motocross of Nations. Well except for one major point – in the MXoN the team race is all important and the individual feats less so. At the Juniors though it's more about who is the best rider in the class, with a team element tacked on to the end, which works very well and the cream definitely rises to the top. With previous winners like Ken Roczen, Jeffrey Herlings, Eli Tomac and more – do well here.

and chances are you'll have a bright future in motocross.

Each of the three classes (65, 85 and 125) has timed qualifying on Saturday before the two Sunday races, with the same scoring format used in the GPs (25pts for first, 22 for second etc) with highest points winning. The team event then adds up the placings of the best rider from their nation in each class with the lowest points tally being crowned the best country.

65cc

The 65cc class kicked off proceedings, with the track in its best conditions of the day (a marked contrast to Cingoli last year when they over-watered it for the 65s). It was Caleb Grothues from Australia who immediately grabbed the early lead and set about breaking away. European 65cc champion Xylian Ramella suffered a couple of crashes which left him

>>



**The JWC kicked off with the
Seville track in tip-top
condition...**



WHO'S BRIAN HSU?

What do you get if you cross one Taiwanese mother, a Hungarian father, a child born in Germany and a family that lives in Italy? Answer: a Junior world 85cc champion by the name of Brian Hsu. In 2010, Brian came runner-up to America's Jake Pinhacos in the 65cc JWC after a couple of mistakes cost him victory. A year later he was back trying again, this time in the 85cc class but due to being one of the younger riders, he struggled. However in Bulgaria, on one of the few Suzuki's on the 85cc starting grid, Hsu's 3-1 moto scores were enough for an amazing victory.

Growing up in Taiwan, in his early career he represented that nation, and it was because of that decision, as much as his skill, that he got recognised. However due to his progression in the sport, he has now decided to ride for the country of his birth, Germany. This will obviously lead to Ken Roczen comparisons, but it was more to do with visa's, sporting federations and politics than a quest to follow in Germany's most recent famous motocross export.

Whatever the reasons though, Brian Hsu is definitely on the radar now for many pro teams, and with an awesome style on the bike, fans will begin following suit. Keep an eye on this Taiwanese-Hungarian-German because he is the true definition of a world class.



**HM Plant KTM's James
Dunn pocketed a 10-3
scorecard**

TRACK TROUBLES

Over-looking the Sevlievo track in Bulgaria is a big sign that says "The Best Motocross Track in the World" and while that is always debatable at the best of times, for the weekend of the Junior World Championships, it was nowhere near the top of the table.

Normally the track consists of a hard-pack surface, going up and down some steep hills with rutted out hairpins at the bottom, throw in some big tabletops and a couple of scrub-jumps and you have yourselves a real test of man and machine.

The whole facility is impressive, with two permanent grandstands that afford views of about 90% of the track, there is also the important hard-standing and flat pit area, with excellent bike washing facilities, showers, and everything that motocross teams and families require. The media centre is one of the best on the tour and there is even a helicopter landing pad, should you fancy avoiding the 2hr hair-raising drive from Sofia!

However, the crucial aspect for the riders was the track conditions and unfortunately, they were extremely poor. Matters weren't helped by 35-40C temperatures but after Saturday, there was plenty of time to dress up the track and douse it with enough water to get some moisture down there for the racing on Sunday. This didn't happen, and despite the watering that did take place on Sunday, it was nowhere near enough to stop 90% of the track turning into a dangerous and dusty, high-speed freeway.

The only places that weren't really dusty were the hairpins at the bottom of the hills, as these were like soup with all the water draining down there. This made things doubly difficult for the riders as they came down the hills with poor visibility into the mud, with only luck to help them pick a line.

Admittedly, it only really got too bad for the final two motos of the day, but that really is two too many when you're talking about world championships, at an event which is supposed to be the best amateur event in the world. No word as yet as where next year's race will be, but for whoever it is they need to put as much effort into the track as organisers do at GP rounds.

Petrov hits it Herlings-style in the 85s



Brian Hsu made his mark in 2012, Suzuki knows it too...

BAD LUCK

With this "World Championship" lasting just two motos, you not only need speed to win it, you also need a bit of luck on your side. All it takes is for one thing to go wrong and your chances are over. There is no 'next week' and no chances to recover, you have two races to go out and prove you are the best, otherwise come back next year and try all over again.

After such an impressive performance in front of his home crowd at Matterley Basin, England, big things were expected of Conrad Mewse in Bulgaria. However his title chances were over before they even began as his clutch slipped as the gate dropped, leaving him behind the metal object, watching 39 competitors head around the first bend. He eventually did get going but by that stage the leaders were long gone and it was all he could do to make it up to 12th.

Anthony Rodriguez was coming off a Loretta Lynn's winning performance a couple of weeks prior so he had every chance of doing well. Unfortunately, after a 4th in race one, his bike died on him in race two after just four laps and he had to push it back to the pits disappointed.

The Americans have won the event for the last two

years so heading into Bulgaria, they were favourites once again for the team crown. They'd picked six of their very best riders and were looking to make it three out of three since the addition of the 65cc class into the competition in 2010.

However luck was definitely not on their side this year as two DNF's and a multitude of bike problems hampered their progress. First up Jake Pinhancos' Suzuki started bogging, after he'd opened up a five second lead in the first 85cc moto. Then in the first 125 race, Jordon Smith's back wheel got caught up in the green ski-netting and then a couple of laps later, 50ft up the track, Jarek Balkovic's bike just gave up. Their only real chance of glory rested on Austin Forkner as he won moto one in the 85cc class, but after a collision with Ivan Petrov near the end of race two, his radiator gave up and he had to crawl over the finish line seconds behind Petrov, who re-took him, which handed the title to Brian Hsu.

So a lot of good riders suffered a lot of bad luck at this event, but that's the nature of motocross and with this being a one-off championship, anything can and did happen.

American Forkner hit bad luck in moto two



Conrad Mewse had clutch problems





RESULTS

65cc OVERALL

1 Caleb Grothues AUS	1-1
2 Riley Dukes AUS	3-3
3 Robert Krisztian Tompa ROM	4-5
4 Conner Mullenix USA	8-4
5 Timur Petrashev RUS	6-6

85cc OVERALL

1 Brian Hsu GER	3-1
2 Austin Forkner USA	1-3
3 Davy Pootjes NED	2-5
4 Ivan Petrov BUL	9-2
5 Tomas Ragadini ITA	6-4

125cc OVERALL

1 Tim Gajser SLO	1-1
2 Simone Furlotti ITA	2-2
3 Pauls Jonass LAT	3-5
4 Jorge Zaragoza ESP	6-4
5 James Dunn GBR	10-3

NATIONS OVERALL

1 Netherlands	17pts	7-3-7
2 Italy	21pts	14-5-2
3 USA	24pts	4-2-18
4 Australia	27pts	1-9-17
5 South Africa	32pts	17-7-8

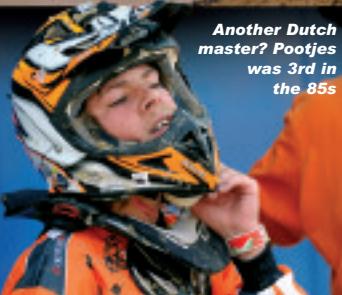
10th overall, but he definitely had the speed to mount a challenge if he could've just kept it on two wheels. Others who struggled with consistency were Dutch youngster Raivo Dankers and Slovenian Luka Milec who both had alternating 2nd and 14th place finishes, leaving them 6th and 7th overall. However the day belonged to the Grothues who won both motos convincingly and now makes the long trip back to Australia as World Champion. It has been a hard slog for Caleb as he also competed at Loretta Lynn's in America, (where he managed a 2nd and a 4th behind American rider Conner Mullenix who finished 4th here), so he'll be looking forward to a bit of a break before he jumps on the 85cc for next year's racing. He was also followed onto the podium by another Australian Riley Dukes who kept it consistent and stayed out of all the trouble for a pair of thirds, so it was a good day for the team in green and gold.

85cc

In the 85s, there was a lot more drama and the result was hard to call all the way to the chequered flag. American Jake Pinhancos had a good lead in moto one, before bike problems forced him to drop back and out of contention. This left fellow American Austin Forkner to battle it out with Dutch rider Davy Pootjes for the win, which Austin took with Germany's Brian Hsu in third. In the second moto, Hsu jumped out to an early lead and was gapping the rest of the field to take the victory, leaving him with 3-1 overall and 45pts. This meant Forkner had to finish second in order to follow in the footsteps of Joey Savatgy, Eli Tomac, Jake Pinhancos, Blake Wharton and a few more American Junior World Champs. Things were looking good as he worked his way through the pack, but in order to get second place, he had to overtake Bulgarian Ivan Petrov who lives at this track (literally). The small home crowd were obviously cheering on their rider so gasps went up, when a collision between Forkner and Petrov left the local boy on the ground.



Pauls Jonass grabbed 3rd overall in the 125s



Another Dutch master? Pootjes was 3rd in the 85s

At that stage it looked in the bag for Forkner who just had to complete the remaining couple of laps ahead of a re-mounted Bulgarian. However in the collision, his radiator had been damaged and with a few corners left, it gave up, leaving him to cruise home, but not before Petrov had re-overtaken him for second place, handing Hsu his first world title. It was a pretty crazy finale and one that left Forkner in tears, and Hsu utterly exhausted but it's becoming something of a regular occurrence, for a title to be won in such dramatic circumstances.

125cc

There was no such drama at the front of the 125cc race as the class act of 2012 in the European series, Tim Gajser cleaned up, just like he had here earlier in the year. Having won one moto in each of the previous two 125cc world championships, it was good to see at least one of the favourites have everything go according to plan on the day and walk away with a 1-1 and the title. Behind him the Italian Simone Furlotti provided brief resistance but in the end he could do nothing to stop the Slovenian, and came home second in both races. Last year's 85cc champion, Pauls Jonass from Latvia rounded out the podium with two very impressive motos against a lot of older competition and he'll be hoping next year to go a couple of places better for his second world title.

TEAM EVENT

In the team event, America were definite favourites but after the first 125cc race, they suffered a pair of DNFs giving other nations a real chance at glory. The Netherlands seized this chance with three consistent finishes thanks to Dankers in the 65cc, Pootjes in the 85cc and Calvin Vlaanderen in the 125cc. They just beat out the Italians, who needed a better 65cc result to stand a chance, with the Americans third, despite all their 125 troubles.

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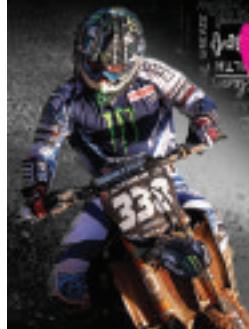
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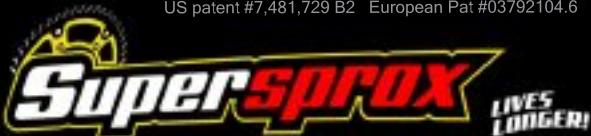


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ELITE YOUTH CUP SERIES' SIGNS OFF
AT CULHAM

GOLDEN TYRE AND BSMA PART COMPANY
TO FORM SEPARATE SERIES' IN 2013

BW85 RUNNER-UP DAVID KEET TALKS
ASPIRATIONS AND AMBITIONS FOR 2013



Ricky Roderick sealed overall victory in the GT Cup



Best performance of the year for Heyman at Mallory



Coleman took an easy win in the Biggies

GO YOUR OWN WAY

FINAL ROUND AT MALLORY AS GOLDEN TYRE AND BSMA FORM SEPARATE SERIES' IN 2013

A few weeks back the BSMA Golden Tyre sponsored national series reached its 2012 climax at Mallory Park. Shortly afterwards an interesting email from Golden Tyre dropped into the Rage inbox with comprehensive details about a brand new competition in 2013. Hot on the heels of the Golden Tyre news, a separate press release from the BSMA – also with fresh detailed changes for 2013. The most interesting one being that after two productive years the BSMA and Golden Tyre are no longer in harmony, no longer hooked-up, and they go separate ways next term.

Rage understands the 2013 GT Cup will be a stand-alone series running under ACU license. Six choice track venues plus one TBA have already been announced – and the dates will follow once all possible clashes have been looked at. Taking the 2013 GT Cup to an even higher level, television coverage at every round is being provided by 2WheelsTV – this along with a possible media hook-up with Jeff Perrett's MX Vice team. Rage has received confirmation of the TV deal informing us that a package will be broadcast on Motors TV and a free to air internet channel (2wheelstv.com) and the coverage will concentrate on the youth classes.

After chatting with Bernardinelli Claudio at Golden Tyre he has also outlined many more possible innovations to be officially announced later in the year. Claudio also stated with almost 200 riders already registered you'd better get your skates on if you want to be part of it. The BSMA will court a new headline sponsor for next year. "The series will be promoted by new

sponsors who will use a variety of media to enhance and promote the series to the highest standard" – is the official BSMA quote. They went on to claim a slicker approach with stronger promotion than ever before rolled out by a younger management team who have themselves been involved in the sport as racers from an early age. Provisionally the BSMA have announced six dates and venues for 2013 – "watch this space" is the BSMA exclamation on their website. Looks very much like we will have to watch both Golden Tyre and BSMA space – it should be interesting!

MALLORY MADNESS

The BSMA 2012 series finalised at Mallory Park and Charlie Heyman grabbed the Auto class weekend win with his best performance of the year. Charlie nailing down three terrific heat wins all boding well for him amongst the 'one levered' gang next term. Championship leader going into the event, Louie Kessell, finished in second overall but he did more than enough to elbow the Bobby Bruce and Toby Potter challenge – high-flying young Cornishman Kessell ultimately ran off with a well deserved 50cc title.

Even though they had both missed a round each and had some ground to recover, hot shots Gary Ashley in the 65s and Albie Wilkie in the Smallies were each in with a shout for ultimate glory if things went there way in Leicestershire. Over the two day meeting they piled on the pressure and both went home with a maximum 225 points haul. In Ashley's case with a GT Cup title too as he narrowly edged out Reagan Brookes in a tense finish. Wilkie however had to

settle for championship silver as Henry Siddiqui won the SW85cc title, holding his nerve brilliantly with a top three finish in every race.

In the Biggies a disappointing line-up of just 13 runners, where championship second placed runner Henry Williams was also a big miss, proved easy pickings for title favourite Josh Coleman. Three race wins to his name along with another round win, (his fourth on the spin) and Coleman wrapped up the title in style. Danger UK's David Keet buoyed with a single race win claimed weekend second – also snatching the series runner-up berth as Oli Benton took the other individual heat win.

Welsh Wizard Ricky Roderick with all the previous 125cc smoker class wins to his credit had a perfect unblemished run to maintain. It was no real surprise then when he went five from five, trouncing the opposition in the most entertaining of styles. Roderick also being awarded the main GT Cup prize as the rider of the series. Danny Lanfear proved to be best of the rest by just one point from Rob Holyoake. Lanfear's efforts were enough to secure the championship runners-up berth just seven points ahead of Ryan Butler.

In MX2 Dan Maxey claimed three of the Mallory Park heat wins. This took his season total to seven and even though he posted a blank score in the final championship race it was all good enough to secure the title win. Carl Haycock and Jack Timms were the other race winners as overall consistency was key however and that's how it proved for final round winner for Jordan Carrier – Jordan also finished as championship runner-up.

GT CUP FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

GT CUP - OVERALL WINNER RICKIE RODERICK

AUTOS

1 Louie Kessell 922	1 Gary Ashley 896
2 Bobby Bruce 881	2 Reagan Brookes 889
3 Toby Potter 872	3 Ryan Rowlands 863
4 Charlie Heyman 841	4 Dominic Lancett 779
5 Harvey James 795	5 Ryan Mundell 749

JUNIOR 65cc

1 Louie Kessell 922	1 Gary Ashley 896
2 Bobby Bruce 881	2 Reagan Brookes 889
3 Toby Potter 872	3 Ryan Rowlands 863
4 Charlie Heyman 841	4 Dominic Lancett 779
5 Harvey James 795	5 Ryan Mundell 749

SW85cc

1 Henry Siddiqui 924	1 Josh Coleman 906
2 Albie Wilkie 888	2 David Keet 832
3 Ethan Winchester 789	3 Charlie Putnam 736
4 Aaron Gordon 774	4 Oliver Benton 728
5 Harry Pritchard 763	5 Lewis Dowdswell 696

BW85cc

1 Henry Siddiqui 924	1 Josh Coleman 906
2 Albie Wilkie 888	2 David Keet 832
3 Ethan Winchester 789	3 Charlie Putnam 736
4 Aaron Gordon 774	4 Oliver Benton 728
5 Harry Pritchard 763	5 Lewis Dowdswell 696

125cc

1 Rickie Roderick 990	1 Daniel Maxey 876
2 Danny Lanfear 811	2 Jordan Carrier 817
3 Ryan Butler 804	3 Jack Timms 788
4 Lee Truman 755	4 Carl Haycock 718
5 Rob Holyoake 746	5 Ryan Fellows 716

MX2

1 Rickie Roderick 990	1 Daniel Maxey 876
2 Danny Lanfear 811	2 Jordan Carrier 817
3 Ryan Butler 804	3 Jack Timms 788
4 Lee Truman 755	4 Carl Haycock 718
5 Rob Holyoake 746	5 Ryan Fellows 716

FIVE MINUTES WITH...

DAVID KEET

THE SEASON'S OVER BUT DAVID KEET IS ALREADY THINKING AHEAD AND SIGNING UP FOR 2013 SERIES'...

Taking an early look at the 2013 B/W 85cc title contenders (noting that Conrad Mewse is going down the Euro route again) the UK form guide suggests it could well be a tasty tear-up between the likes of Will Keogh, Jordan Eccles, Jay Hague, Michael Ellis, Henry Williams and David Keet. With all the different competition options available, date clashes are a given – just getting the best of the second year Biggy pilots all together on the same start line might be the biggest headache next term. David Keet finished as the GT Cup BW runner-up this year after proving himself at National level down the years so Rage asked him for a few early thoughts on 2013...

Rage: With the new Golden Tyre series making it potentially five different British National championships on offer next year, which series will be your number one pick and why?

DK: I had a great time in the GT Cup this year, dad was really impressed too with the way it all went. I won a mountain bike for finishing as BW runner-up and lots of other smaller prizes like rip-n-roll goggles for getting holeshots. I'm really happy with the mountain bike and I'm picking it up at the Dirt Bike Show! It seemed like a real no-brainer, so we have already registered for next year's GT Cup series. I'm really looking forward to the television coverage and I think there are only a few spaces left in the BWs now.

Rage: After a really good season in the 2009 65's, and then having two battling years campaigning the SW Kawasaki, is winning a national title now your main priority at this stage in your career?

DK: Yeah for sure I think this is even more important for me than racing in Europe. I know I'm right up there with the very best in my age group, I proved that in '09 and again in 2011. At the end of last year coming off the small wheels I knew I needed more power though – the KTM has put me right back in contention. I finished third in the '09 BSMA Juniors, runner-up in the SW's last year and as a runner-up this year. Next year I want to go one better!

Rage: I understand you acquired one of Conrad Mewse's machines at the beginning of July. How good is it?

DK: It's just the best bike I have ever ridden – it's so quick I love it! The engine is prepared by the same Dutch tuner Conrad uses (Grizzly Racing Netherlands) and if we can save it for the big races and make it last I will be smiling. I also have two other bikes as a back-up which are pretty cool too.

Rage: With all the different championships on offer next year how does the National scene stack up from your angle?

DK: It's like there is so much happening right now with all the different series' and Europe too, so many championships. I really would like to do the ONK Dutch championship or the UEM qualifiers with Conrad. I'm not sure if we can do Europe but it will become clearer when all the dates are out. Maybe we will fit in the odd European event for more experience. We did the Zwartecross International event this year and that was mint, deffo want to do that again. Conrad finished third and I was ninth.

Rage: Any other news for 2013 David?

DK: Only about my sponsors really they have all agreed to help me again. Can I say a big thanks to Danger UK, Pulse Racing, Golden-Tyre, Wizard Wash, and Grizzly Tuning.



TOO CLOSE TO CALL - MX85 STARS IN DEVON

MAXXIS ACU CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE REACHING A DRAMATIC CLIMAX...

Sometimes it can never be over until it's finally over! And at the Maxxis MX85cc series closer with just thirteen points covering the top five runners before the final two races run, this particular scrap is a long, long way from being over. More often than not anti-climax best sums up the final fling in championships but this series is so tight at the business end it's guaranteed to keep plenty up on their toes all the way to the final flag!

The ACU introduced the competition new for 2012 stressing that no way did they consider it to represent their premier BW competition – ironically with date clash destruction heaped on the BYNats it's ended up as the best Biggies national shoot-out anywhere this year. Looking down the championship top half there's no doubt it's just about as tasty as it gets this term – and it's a fact only Euro trekker Conrad Mewse has enough firepower to topple this lot. Having said all of that on quality it's a pity the breadth is not so impressive as the series only runs to three rounds. The startline numbers were poor at rounds one and two for a series which should be rammed to the gunnel's.

Josh Gilbert (Buildbase/Albion Honda), Gracie Featherstone (DFB KTM), Jordan Eccles, (KTM) and Todd Kellett (Twisted 7 Kawasaki), have been the four individual heat winners so far but with a 2-2 and a 6-2 return against his name Vampires Rock KTM youngster Will Keogh has red plated all the way. 13-year-old Will, in his rookie Big Wheel year, holds a six points advantage as the last round thriller beckons at Little Silver on October 7. Fifth in the series and some thirteen points adrift of top spot is Jordan Eccles – he's another rider who graduated from last year's SW ranks – but he will surely need every one of the fifty points available together with a plague on every other house if he is to lift the title.

Season long the more experienced big hitters across all codes have been Gilbert, Kellett and Featherstone. The talented trio are all locked together in joint second just six behind Keogh – hence the final race could well be the nail biter to end all nail biters. A brace of race wins for either Gilbert, Kellett or Featherstone will be enough to snatch the crown irrespective of how Keogh goes. Gilbert the runaway MCF champion will start as slight favourite on a course that should favour four banger power but predicting the final outcome in this one is a job for fully paid up Mystic Meg types only!

STANDINGS

- 1 Will Keogh 81
- 2 Josh Gilbert 75
- 3 Todd Kellett 75
- 4 Gracie Featherstone 75
- 5 Jordan Eccles 68



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Josh Gilbert notched-up the
BW85 series at Culham
Below: Best Rookie Millward



Mucky but 'appy! Tom
Grimshaw slipped to
65cc victory

PACKED AND WRAPPED

**RED BULL PRO NATIONALS ELITE YOUTH CUP SERIES
SIGNS OFF WITH A BANG AT CULHAM**

Going into the EYC finale at Culham all four youth titles appeared well sorted, with talented Josh Gilbert's B/W crown already a certainty after the previous round. It was now up to the other class leaders Chris Mills (Junior 65's), Keenan Hird (Smallies), and Jake Millward (Rookies) to hold their nerve. With both Millward and Hird packing their 'A game' for Oxfordshire it was pretty much business as usual for both as they wrapped-up respective titles with yet another overall win apiece. But for Mills it was nothing like his A game and final race heartbreak via a cruel machine failure handed the title to his Powerband team-mate Tom Grimshaw.

In the 65's on a weekend of extreme contrasting weather conditions Dutch speed merchant Raivo Dankers snatched a brace – one in bright sunshine, the other as the rain lashed down. Ben Clark also nailed a wet weather heat win together with an impressive overall victory – but it was Grimshaw who jubilantly won the final race and the biggest prize of all. South African Marcus Phelps and Zander Brown were the other heat winners along with Hird in the smallies with Phelps ending up as a comfortable series runner-up.

In the Biggies Todd Kellett claimed a pair of race wins and series second as Mitchell Lewis landed his best result of the year with victory in race two together with the section win. Champion Josh Gilbert and Connor Hughes were the other two section heat winners.

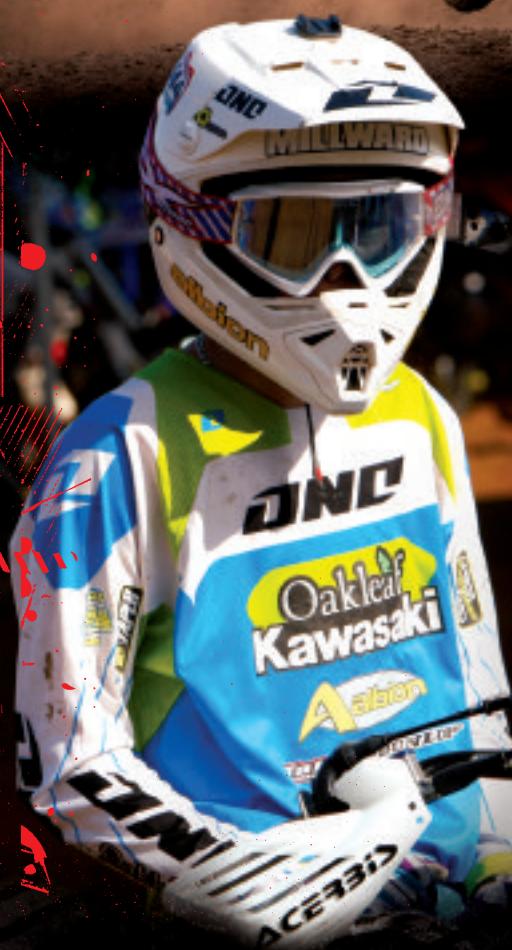
In the Rookies James Harrison and Ben Watson were the heat winners along with triple

race supremo and champion Millward. Watson and Harrison also stood alongside Millward on the end of meeting box, while fourth placed Dan Thornhill did enough to secure the championship runner-up berth.

Tom Grimshaw – 65cc "It's an amazing feeling! I've been working really hard for this. Going into the last race I knew it was very doubtful that I was going to win the championship so I just went out there for my last ride on a 65 to do the best that I could and hoped that luck would go my way. I really feel for Christopher – he's my team-mate and I know how hard he's been working for the title but he just had some bad luck in that race. I've also had a DNF this season so it balances things out."

Keenan Hird - SW85cc "It feels great to have got the championship - I gave it everything I had to get there. At the beginning of the season I wasn't really on pace but I tried even harder and began to progress. I started to think I could maybe win it at FatCat when I won most of the races, then after doing well at Hawkstone I thought that if I can do it there I can do it anywhere really."

Jake Millward - Rookies "The weekend couldn't have gone any better really. After the first race today I had the championship won but I still wanted to go out there and do my thing. Winning the title just means so much to me - growing up I'd dream of winning a British national championship. Next year my plan is to move up into the pros - I know it's going to be difficult but I'll do a lot of training over the winter and come out with a clear head and show



FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

JUNIOR 65's

- 1 Tom Grimshaw 1284
- 2 Christopher Mills 1265
- 3 Scott Russell 1192
- 4 Rossi Beard 1133
- 5 Callum Gasson 969
- 6 Ben Clark 892

SW 85cc

- 1 Keenan Hird 1286
- 2 Marcus Phelps 1186
- 3 George Grigg Pettitt 929
- 4 Alexander Brown 886
- 5 James McFayden 883
- 6 Dexter Douglas 823

BW 85cc

- 1 Josh Gilbert 1226
- 2 Todd Kellett 1051
- 3 Scooter Webster 1001
- 4 Mitchell Lewis 969
- 5 Gradie Featherstone 875
- 6 Alfie Bowtell 874

ROOKIES

- 1 Jake Millward 1316
- 2 Dan Thornhill 1164
- 3 Ben Watson 1068
- 4 James Harrison 1060
- 5 Jordan Divall 940
- 6 Robert Davidson 885

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

THEN CONTACT OUR YOUTH EDITOR MIKE GURNEY AT MIKEGURNEY55@YAHOO.CO.UK



CP377 Racing Team **KAWASAKI KX450F-SR**

RIDER: CHRISTOPHE POURCEL #377

Take a stroll through an MXGP paddock and as you stumble past the Kawasaki team awnings you might notice there's plenty of 'em – enough to get confused about who's where as Kawasaki Racing Team bumps up against Team Floride Monster Energy Kawasaki Pro Circuit, Team Rockstar Bud Racing Kawasaki and...have we missed any? Among all the shiny green jewels are the MX1 machines of the Pourcel brothers in Team CP377 Monster Energy Kawasaki Pro Circuit.

The CP377 Team is a division of the CLS Racing team run by Jean Jacques Luisetti (we hope you're keeping up?). Jean Jacques Luisetti being the owner of Floride Moto, one of Europe's largest Kawasaki dealers, stepped in at the end of 2011 to give Christophe a package in Europe which they cemented for the full 2012 season and although Paulin just pipped him to third overall, GP moto wins earlier in the year

ain't to be sniffed at for CP.

What's under the hood mista? The team has a suspension technician prepping and tweaking but he's working with stock kit and there's a lot more standard kit than you'd expect as it goes, aside from the external sponsored items you'll spy. Gearbox and engine internals are standard except for Pro Circuit piston and camshaft which is not off-the-shelf Pro Circuit but neither is it 'full factory'. Somewhere in between and the same can be said of the exhaust system. The team works its own cylinder heads and uses a Kawasaki Racing ECU plus a larger radiator from Japan – on soft tracks.

The other interesting fact about Pourcel C's bike is the amount of time he spends tweaking the WRP handlebars. Apparently he has as real thing for the bar weight, position in the clamps, height, position fore and aft. French men can be picky. You heard it here.



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Shane Carless MX2
Mark Perfect MX2
Pete Mitchell MX1

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MONSTER CUP!

The indoor season launches with one massive bang next month as we haul ass Stateside to the Monster Energy Cup ho-down where the biggest names in SX will be warming up for winter. We've also got ISDE, MXoN and possibly a bit of TdN. Oooh, and Dave Thorpe's 50th might be worth a shout. Check it out...

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